FREE

Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk October 16, 2016

Mid edition No 734



POLICE

Creepy clown craze sweeps county

Dozens or incidents reported and two arrested

GOVERNMENT

County Hall on the brink

Senior KCC officer says future council cuts could be 'absolutely disasterous'

CELEBRITY

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Robbie Williams stops video shoot after prang

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Whitehall has tied legs and hands of councils

FINDING someone who will happily pay more tax is a bit like finding someone who admits to thinking Tony Blair should be prime minister again; one assumes they are out there, but they are nigh on impossible to find.

But Kent County Council is facing a task where the only real option open to it is to raise their sizeable chunk of the council tax bill. And however modest that may actually be (around £40 a year for an average household which is about 80p a week) the knee-jerk reaction is to oppose it.

We don't want to pay any more money. Obviously. But before long we may just have to consider what we lose if we don't.

In a drive to make councils self-sustainable by 2020, the government is slicing its central funding dramatically. And that inevitably means the loss of jobs and reductions in services offered. All things we have, over the years, rather taken for granted. One cut today may not impact you directly, but the chances are tomorrow's just might.

Raising tax is a small way towards plugging the funding shortfall. Yet there is a restriction in the amount council tax can go up - currently pegged at 1.9 per cent. Want to raise it further and you have to hold a referendum. Not only is that a costly exercise, the phrase 'asking turkeys to vote for Christmas' is most often uttered. So councils have their hands not only tied but legs too.

Of course, given local government is hardly a cherished institution - the common view is negative - sympathy is hard to come by, but actually it deserves a decent dollop of it right now.

It is facing financial pressures borne out of idealogy rather than simply austerity. We may not hold it in the highest regard but should we



Editor **Chris Britcher**

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seven days

Stories which made the headlines @kentnews.co.uk during the past week

Mayor pushes for TfL to take over key rail routes

By Luke May
luke.may@archant.co.uk



PROPOSAL: Mayor Sadiq Khan sees the move as key to improving London commuter services

MAYOR of London Sadiq Khan on Friday laid out the business case to the government for a transformation of Kent's rail services which could see Southeastern lose parts of its Metro service to Transport for London.

And that means Oyster cards could be used for travel beyond its existing limit of Dartford and into Stone Crossing, Greenhithe, Northfleet, Gravesend, Dunton Green and Sevenoaks.

Mr Khan said: "Our plans will not only use TfL's skills and expertise to improve the daily commute for millions of Londoners, but as act as a catalyst for new jobs and homes in outer London."

Kent County Council is supportive of the plans which were laid out by the London mayor before transport secretary Chris Grayling. The plans were originally started by former mayor Boris Johnson.

In January, the government agreed in principle the further devolution of suburban rail services.

Under proposals, Tfl could take over services in 2018 – to coincide with the end of Southeastern's current franchise.

County councillor for transport, Matthew Balfour, said: "We are pleased that Tfl accepted our non-negotiable 'red lines' as a starting point for discussions, and as a result, rail commuters are set to reap a series of benefits."

The 'red lines' outlined by KCC told TfL the council would not accept a reduction in service levels, adding there must 'be no detrimental effect on Kent's rail fares' should a transfer take place.

Meanwhile, there was good news for commuters in the county who suffer delays on services after an improved compensation scheme was announced.

Currently, travellers can only claim refunds on their tickets after a 30-minute delay.

Now, the transport secretary Chris Grayling has cut that down to 15 minutes.

Over the next few months, Southern rail passengers, which include passengers boarding at Tonbridge and Ashford, will be the first to benefit from the Delay Replay 15 scheme. Further changes will be introduced in stages, with Southeastern adopting the scheme.

Passengers will be able to claim 25 per cent of the cost of the single fare for delays of 15-29 minutes.

Great expectations fail as Dickens World shuts leaving staff redundant

ONE of the county's big tourist attractions shut down this week with a number of staff being made redundant.

The company behind Dickens World in Chatham closed its doors on Wednesday – stunning many staff, some of whom apparently only found out after being notified via social media.

The attraction, which opened amid great fanfare in 2007, was designed to celebrate the links with author Charles Dickens who lived and worked in the area.

It offered visitors the chance to step back in time to experience the world when Dickens was alive.

But it has struggled to deliver sufficient revenues ever since and this week finally paid the price.

The closure was the result of landlords taking back possession of the premises and forfeiting the lease.

Jonathan Sadler, interim chief executive of the Chatham Maritime Trust, upon whose land the attraction sat, told us it was up to the owners to consider its future use but maintained confidence that the area would continue to attract new investors.

Labour party leader on Medway council Vince Maple added: "The reality is many people have said the concept of Dickens World was not one which was suitable for recognising the great author.

"This time will be a difficult, upsetting and challenging for staff and their families and I would hope that Dickens World have treated their staff correctly, appropriately and with respect."

A council spokesperson said: "While it is a great shame to hear that Dickens World attraction in Chatham is closing, Medway's strong connections to Dickens remain.

"Thousands of people flock to Medway every year to enjoy the Dickens Festival and Dickensian Christmas Festival, as well as a whole host of other Dickens related events and activities."

Estuary flood risk homes increasing, warns agency

RISING sea levels mean more people than ever are now at risk from flooding along the Thames Estuary, a report has revealed.

The Environment Agency's latest survey says up to 50,000 more people are now living with the tidal floodplain in London and along the Kent and Essex coast. That brings it to a total of 1.3 million.

And, according to the agency, that's £275 billion worth of homes.

However, despite more homes and people being at risk, the actual likelihood of flooding has not risen, and 98 per cent of flood defence structures in the estuary are currently in good or fair condition.

Howard Davidson, of the agency, said: ''This report is fundamental to continuing to manage that risk and keep people safe.''

Race begins to land place at grammar after Kent Test

MORE than 6,500 pupils have passed the Kent Test after results were released on Thursday - up from 6,259 securing a place last year.

Out of the 6,537 deemed suitable for a grammar education, 4,369 are from Kent - compared with 2,145 outside of the county.

Figures from Kent County Council also show a rise in the number of children sitting the selective exam, up from 13,724 last year to more than 14,300 this year.

It will spark the traditional rush to try and secure a grammar berth - a situation which should be eased by an increase in space - rising this year to 4,959 from 4,767 the year before.

Deadline for applications to secondary schools is October 31.

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seven days

Stories which made the headlines **@kentnews.co.uk** during the past week

Garden city boost as A2 upgrade plans launch

DEVELOPMENT of of the Ebbsfleet garden city received another boost this week as plans to upgrade the A2 were launched by Highways England.

One of seven schemes across major routes in the south east worth up to £605m, the planned improvements to junctions near Bluewater are set to go on display as part of a wider plan to enable major developments in the vicinity of Ebbsfleet.

The project aims to reduce congestion, improve safety and boost the economy and over the next few months public consultations will be held to give drivers, residents and businesses their chance to comment to ensure the best possible improvements are taken forward.

She's the one as pop star comes to aid of fan after she crashes car in shock

By Tom Pyman
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ROBBIE Williams stopped filming a music video in Kent to come to the aid of a starstruck fan who crashed her car in shock at seeing the former Take That singer, we can reveal.

Sasha Burgoine and her friend Dan Hughes, 17, had heard rumours Mr Williams was in Leysdown on the Isle of Sheppey on Thursday, and were shocked to see the him and around 50 crew members working on the video for his next single, Love My Life.

Mr Hughes, a student at Canterbury College's Swale Campus, told KoS: "I work in the Garden Cafe near to where they were shooting, and we were told there was a big celebrity around.

"We were being nosy and the first time we tried to have a look we were turned away.

"Then we went up again later, and we were driving along a stony road when I saw Robbie.



STARSTRUCK: Robbie and Sasha

"I told Sasha who craned her neck trying to look at him, but kept driving and crashed the bumper into a metal post.

"We were really embarrassed and they had to stop filming and 15 members of the film crew came to help us get out.

"Robbie was filming us, he came down, shook our hands, and we managed to get a selfie before he took another picture of Sasha's car.

"He was really friendly, he was having a right laugh with us."

A producer asked that the cafe on Shellness Road be used for an interview, but staff rejected an offer of £100, claiming it did not equate to a day's worth of regular customers.

At one stage, Mr Williams was on the brink of moving to the county, having twice looked round the £5m Tudor estate Brenchley Manor, near Tunbridge Wells, in 2010.

He also popped into the Elm Tree pub in the picturesque village to ask locals about the area during his search for a rural retreat.

However, despite being said to have fallen in love with the converted oast house and two cottages in secluded grounds, no firm offer materialised from the star and the property was instead sold to another buyer.



CANOE: Pizza firm's deliver method

River dwellers get pizza the action at last

PIZZA giant Domino's has created a splash with the start of a deliver service by river – the first of its kind in the country.

In what has been a masterstroke in publicity generating, its store in Loose, near Maidstone, says it is running a trial service with those making a delivery reaching homes by canoe.

The delivery staff will be wearing a full wetsuit and have a buoyancy aid to ensure pizzas don't get dunked in the river.

As part of the trial, Domino's has committed to a donation to the Loose Conservation Trust to help preserve the village's picturesque waterways.

It will also be running an in-store initiative for a month that will raise further funds for the trust.

Iiona Paozalyte, store manager, said: "We're really excited to be the first store in the UK tasked with providing a river service. Being in an area that is famed for its scenic waterways means the rivers are a big part of the local community so we're glad we can extend our standard delivery methods."

Debbie Hayes, the first person to order pizza to their riverside home, said: "It's great living by the river but it has always been impossible to get food delivered to out house, so this is great."

Resignation call after Labour member quits

ANGRY Labour members are to stage a protest later this month demanding the resignation of a councillor who defected from the party to the Conservatives.

Claire Jeffrey, who was Labour's only representative on Shepway District Council, left the party last month following the re-election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader, claiming she could no longer support a party that ''tolerated'' anti-Semitism.

Now the under-fire Momentum group, grassroots supporters of Mr Corbyn, are staging a protest on October 26 ahead of a meeting of the full council that evening.

The group said: ''The electorate in East Folkestone voted for a Labour candidate, not an individual and certainly not a Tory. This shows her contempt for the voters. Resign, contest the ward and seek re-election wearing her blue rosette. Let the people have their say.''

Cllr Jeffrey has been unavailable to comment since her defection.

Fury over response to crossing petition

THE government's response to a petition calling for an inquiry into the congestion and delays at the Dartford Crossing has been branded 'pathetic' by the leader of the Dartford Labour group.

More than 16,000 people have put their name to the petition since it was launched last month calling for an investigation into 'botched' improvement work to the northbound river crossing

The Department for Transport has published a response claiming Dart Charge has reduced journey times for drivers and that further measures are being explored to improve the tunnel's performance.

Speaking after a meeting of Dartford Borough Council, where a motion supporting the petition was debated by councillors, Labour leader Jonathon Hawkes said: ''The response from the government has been pathetic. It certainly falls way short of the response people in Dartford deserve. It's a hugely complacent attitude when local people are stuck in gridlock night after night. It's clear the government is not taking Dartford's gridlock crisis seriously.''

MP calls for harbour home to royal yacht

A ROYAL yacht could be based at the Royal Harbour of Ramsgate after a debate in Westminster.

A campaign which has been backed by former minister Michael Gove among others, is calling for a replacement for the Royal Britannia Yacht - historically used for state visits, trade deals, improving diplomatic relations and symbolising British industry.

And South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay told parliamentary colleagues during the debate on Tuesday the only true home for such a yacht should be at the country's only Royal Harbour, in Thanet.

The harbour's royal status was granted in 1821 by King George IV, before acting as a key military port during the Napoleonic Wars and for 'little ships' during Operation Dynamo in the Second World War.

Mr Mackinlay added: ''Ramsgate Harbour's royal links are centuries old and it is only appropriate that it plays home for this new floating beacon for a restored, renewed, outward-looking Britain.''

The House of Lords will debate the issues on October 26.

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KCC reassures after claims we need 600 more classrooms

By Tom Pyman

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ALMOST 600 extra classrooms need to be built in Kent schools before 2020 to cope with a booming child population, according to new data.

Research from environmental specialist, Scape Group, reveals some 581 classrooms or 50 new schools must be developed over the coming years as the number of primary and secondary school children in the county continues to rise.

However, Kent County Council insists it has long been aware of the situation and having provided hundreds of new classrooms as the spike in children went through primary schools, it is aware and is planning for the rise at secondary levels.

It says is has long planned for the provision of additional classrooms and insists while the 581 new classrooms are broadly accurate, this will be delivered by expanding existing schools rather than building dozens of new ones.

Nationally, local authorities are estimating there will be an additional 729,000 primary and secondary school pupils by 2020, based on Department of Education statistics.

The number of primary school pupils in England will rise 8.6 per cent by 2020, but the greatest growth will come from secondary school pupils, set to increase by some 12 per cent.



RETURN: Site of the former Chaucer Technology School

Mark Robinson, chief executive of Scape Group, said: "As the growth of the primary school population gathers pace, the pressure on school places will soon transfer to the secondary population, requiring a new wave of advanced school building.

"The government's preference for free schools has created uncertainty for local authorities, who are tasked with planning and building new schools, but will not be responsible for running them. Proposals for new grammar schools has further muddied the waters."

KCC pointed to the resurrection of at least two schools forced to close in recent years due to declining numbers. Both Pent Valley in Folkestone and the Chaucer in Canterbury are expected to re-open as free schools.

The Chaucer, which shut two years ago, is expected to be welcoming new students by 2019.

Bumps cause 50mph A229 Thanet Way limit

A TEMPORARY 50mph speed limit between Faversham and Herne Bay has been put in place on the A229 Thanet Way – and it's set to last until next year.

The measures were introduced because of uneven road conditions caused by long bouts of both very wet and dry weather conditions which have caused shrinkage and expansion of the clay the road is built on – a potential safety hazard.

Jobs boost as steel works return to isle

STEELWORKS are set to return to Sheerness four years after a plant shut down, bringing dozens of jobs back to the Isle of Sheppey.

Industrials group, Liberty House, has agreed a new long-term lease with Peel Ports, who own the land at Sheerness, and aims to restart production of bar and rod there by mid-2017.

Bogus caller warning

HOMEOWNERS in Dover and Deal have been warned to be on alert for bogus callers and rogue traders in the area after a spate of recent incidents.

Inspector Guy Thompson: "Residents need to be cautious of callers to the door. Doorstep criminals call on unsuspecting households and use any manner of scams. Never invite anyone you don't know into your home."



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Tourist gets lost in Channel on paddleboard and rescued

A GERMAN tourist was picked up seven miles off the coast of Dover on a stand-up paddleboard last weekend, wearing just a hat, fleece and shorts.

The man, who has not been named, was spotted by divers at dawn on Sunday. He is believed to have become disorientated on his paddleboard.

A Home Office spokesman said: "The man was a German tourist in distress but who was in the country legally - he was not an illegal immigrant.

"He had been on the water for some time having gone out on his paddleboard and was picked up by HMS Valiant."

But eyewitness reports offered a different account of the man's origin.



Nigel Scutt, a marine researcher who runs the Dover-Marina.com website, said: "He said he had made his way across the Channel from France, leaving at about midnight.

"The divers saw him at about 7.30am, so he was probably just over halfway towards the UK.

"There is quite a lot of this going on, but it is a polarising issue so the Government does not want it known."

Turner exhibition pulls in big numbers for opening

MORE than 5,000 people visited the opening weekend of a major exhibition of works by JMW Turner in Margate.

JMW Turner: Adventures in Colour is the first exhibition to examine the artist's use of colourful with more than 100 works on show at the gallery which bears his name – the Turner Contemporary.

Running until October 2017, it includes a host of watercolours of Margate drawn by the artist during his time in the seaside town.

Despite miserable weather, visitor figures were up nearly 10 per cent on the same period last year, with the gallery building on the two million visitors it has welcomed since it first opened first years ago.

It smashed that barrier back in June of this year – well ahead of schedule.

The show is curated by leading Turner expert and art historian Ian Warrell.

Victoria Pomery, director of Turner Contemporary, said: "It was fantastic to see the gallery filled with so many visitors for the opening of our autumn exhibitions. We're thrilled with the initial numbers, as well as the hugely positive reception.

"We're extremely proud of our ambitious exhibition programme which continues to bring world-class art to Margate. This continued success is the result of the tireless work of the gallery team, as well as support from patrons, trustees, funders and donors."

Two other exhibitions form part of the autumn programme.

Whately APPG chair

FAVERSHAM and Mid Kent MP Helen Whately has been elected as the chair of the all party parliamentary (APPG) group for mental health.

It will work to inform parliamentarians about all aspects of mental health, and raise the profile of mental health issues in Parliament.

Student dies in Medway

THE University of Kent has paid tribute after a 19-year-old died at the Liberty Quays student accommodation in Gillingham.

He is believed to have died of natural causes on Wednesday. The university said: ''Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this sad time.''

Engineering a career

BENENDEN School this week hosted the inaugural conference showcasing the career opportunities available to women in the fields of science and engineering.

More than 150 girls and teachers, from state and independent schools, attended from across London and the south east.

Gravesend-on-Thames?

COUNCILLORS in Gravesham are chewing over a suggestion to change the town's name to Gravesend-upon-Thames.

It was proposed by the borough's tourism councillor Jordan Meade at a cabinet meeting held this week. Staines in Surrey took a similar step in 2012.



Top Three Stories



1. Winter is coming...

Gritters rolled out across the county

2. Tory hold in by=election

Vote came after death of Cllr Brookbank

3. Pensioner robbed

A woman in her 80s had her bag stolen

The Essential Guide:



to Lower Thames Crossing

Everything you need to know about the multi-billion pound project



FEATURED PHOTO GALLERY: Her Majesty the Queen arrived by helicopter in Chatham this week before touring the site of the Brompton Barracks in an open-top Land Rover. See page 19 for more photos and the full story.

Missed last week's...?

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Top Three Blogs



1. Are receptionists rude?

Or is our health service just overstretched?

2. Variable speed cameras

Confusion on a stretch of the M20

3. Kent is leading the way

Take pride in our approach to mental health

Results of the *KoS* Online Poll

Is another 4% council tax increase fair?

1. It should go up more - 15%
2. Four per cent is about right - 31%
3. No, we pay enough already - 46%
4. Don't know - 8%

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Cops get tough in crackdown on creepy clown craze across county

After appearing on the streets of the US, social media swept a bizarre trend of dressing up as a clown and frightening people into the UK, with nearly 60 incidents reported here in Kent. **Emily King** reports

POLICE say they will continue to clampdown hard on anyone causing distress by dressing up as a clown.

The nation has been swept by incidents – carried over on social media by a craze in the US – which sees people don clown outfits with a view to scaring people.

While most have just jumped out to spook people, other incidents in the country have been more sinister, with reports of those dressed up as clowns chasing people with weapons and frightening schoolchildren and old people.

In the past week, there have been at least 59 reported incidents of people dressing up as clowns across Kent.

Superintendent Simon Thompson, of Kent Police, explained: "There is an emerging trend, particularly on social media, of people dressing up as clowns and in some instances taking the opportunity to scare or intimidate other people."

Police have warned that anyone dressing up with a view to intimidating people or causing fear, could be charged with a criminal offence under the Public Order Act.

A police spokesperson reiterated: "We are not going to dish out cautions to every person dressed as a clown but if they do carry out a public order offence they will be dealt with the same way anyone causing an offence would be."

Two men have been arrested in Kent so far and there are fears numbers could escalate in the countdown to Halloween at the end of the month.

Ashley Symes, 23, from Sittingbourne, was punched in the face after targeting unsuspecting victims while wielding a baseball bat in the Dockside Outlet car park in Chatham.

He was later arrested by police and cautioned.

Similarly a 20-year-old man from Bexleyheath was arrested for a section five order offence – causing distress or alarm. A spokesperson for Bexley Police said: "We were called following a report of five youths dressed as clowns in the Danson Park area. A 20-year-old man was arrested and subsequently dealt with by a penalty notice for disorder."

In one particularly worrying threat, one school received anonymous warnings via social media that 20 clowns were set to descend on the school and that pupils should "watch out down the alleyways".

They warned that they were coming to get the pupils and that they should "try not to get stabbed." Police are currently investigating the source of the original post and visited the school to reassure parents, pupils and staff they are safe.

While most incidents took place earlier in the week, when the national hype was at its peak – with stories running on the front of several national newspapers – police clearly hope a hardline will send out a deterrent message.

> **"There's a trend, particularly on social media, of people dressing up as clowns and in some instances scaring or intimidating other people"**
>
> **Supt Simon Thompson,** Kent Police

"We don't know how long the trend is going to last because we're not experts on social media trends," said a Kent Police spokesman

There has been a Facebook group set up called the Keep Clowns Out of Kent Force aimed at compiling sightings and pouring scorn on their antics. A spokesperson from the group said: "This is basically to keep the people of Kent safe and to keep a log of any events, report to police and be able to take action if in an area near you.

"Hopefully we will be able to stamp out this stupid epidemic, keep our kids safe and the streets clear of these attention seekers."

The clown craze began in America as what many thought was a PR stunt for the latest movie adaptation of Stephen King's best-selling book IT.

It has an evil spirit appearing in the form of a clown. Originally a film in 1990, a remake of the movie hits theatres next year.

In the US, some clowns – dubbed 'killer clowns' have been seen armed with chainsaws and machetes.

And with the power of social media leaping the Atlantic in seconds, it arrived on our shores this week.

It was first reported in the UK in the north of England, but spread rapidly. It has become a national concern as sightings have also been reported in Cumbria, London, Devon and Wales.

One man from Blackburn claimed he was stabbed by a clown brandishing a 10inch blade, while another man from Manchester said his car was approached by two clowns with machetes.

What's more, real clowns say they are fed are with the bad press.

Marnie Dock, from Moscow State Circus, a touring circus currently performing in Rochester, said: "We have a lot of concerns and we are worried for our business in the run up to Halloween.

"The characters in our circus we would call clowns don't have the traditional heavy make up look anymore, as that's gone out of fashion. They're more Charlie Chaplin-style characters."

Joey the Clown, a professional clown from Herne Bay, has also noticed a change in his business.

He said: "It is bad for the profession, but nowadays it's better for us to go for a more low key look.

"This trend is killing the art of being a clown."

Zippos Circus founder and director, Martin Burton, has taken clowns out of his show altogether in recent years after Hollywood's twisting of the image.

Explaining his exclusion of clowns he says: "The recent taking of clowns from humour to horror started with Stephen King and now it has been adopted for Halloween and in film around the world and it is simply not funny. We are concerned that families might be put off attending our circus, and we robustly condemn these clown stalkers."

Supt Thompson added: "While there have been some instances where people in masks have intimidated others, we have also received calls to report clown sightings in general. We would ask those people looking to report clown incidents to us to consider whether an offence has taken place, such as causing distress or fear, as there will be a lot of people dressed up in the coming weeks as Halloween approaches.

"If someone is being intimidated, threatened or their safety is put in danger, call us."

MP's fury at both sides of controversial protest plans

Seaside town braces itself for march as communities hit out at negative impact they have on where they live and work



PROTEST: Kent Anti-Racism Network say they are opposing the far-right march to stand up to fascism

By Adele Couchman
adele.couchman@archant.co.uk

DOVER and Deal MP Charlie Elphicke has condemned a planned far-right and anti-fascist stand off in Margate next weekend, saying both sides are on the "same evil coin of extremism and hate".

The news comes as the UK's first White Lives Matter march – a branch of a far-right white supremacy group started in the US in response to the Black Lives Matter campaign – has been announced via social media to take place on Saturday, October 22.

Kent Police says an intended protest is due to take place from Margate railway station.

To oppose the march, the Kent Anti-Racism Network and community group Thanet Stand Up to Racism will be organising a music event on the same day at Fort Crescent near the Winter Gardens.

Police and locals will be keen to avoid the ugly scenes seen in Dover earlier this year when far-right protestor and anti-racism groups clashed on the town's streets.

More than 70 people were arrested after a demo by the far-right East Kent Alliance and a counter protest from Kent Anti- Racism Network spiralled into violence on January 30.

Speaking of a possible clash between rival groups erupting again in Margate, Mr Elphicke said: "Too often the far-right and so-called anti-fascists have brought violence to the streets of east Kent. Neither group is welcome.

"In Dover we worked with Kent Police, got 600 officers in the town and took back control of the streets from these lawless thugs.

"Now these violent people can no longer turn up and have a big fight, they've stopped coming to Dover.

"The far-right target east Kent as it is the closest point to Calais and they can claim to be protesting against immigration. The 'anti-fascists' meanwhile protest in favour of open borders.

"Yet the truth is they are just opposite sides of the same evil coin of extremism and hate. They should be banned from disrupting the lives of ordinary folk who just want to go about their daily lives."



POLICE: Anti-fascist protesters are held by police lines as they clash with right wing protestors in Dover. Credit: Kent Anti-Racism Network

Thanet North MP Sir Roger Gale also said the views of either side were "distasteful", but added they had a right to protest.

Kaz Peet, a spokesperson of the Margate Rocks Against Racism festival due to take place next Saturday, says the UK branch of White Lives Matter has targeted Margate due to the politics of the area.

She explained: "Margate is a Ukip stronghold and we shouldn't let this message take hold at all. I have mixed race children and they've had to leave a school in Thanet due to racism."

She added: "White Lives Matter are officially deemed a hate group in the US, and as far as I'm concerned they have overstepped the boundaries of free speech and shouldn't even be allowed to come to Margate.

"They are a physical and nasty nuisance to the community here and hopefully we will drown out the hideous messages of these morons.

"We cannot allow a hate group to come to Margate and not have counter action at some point.

"Our protest will be peaceful and ideally we would like to see the far-right group come and join us and see the error of their ways."

Momentum Thanet, a branch of the left-wing group that supports Jeremy Corbyn, will also be supporting the counter-protest music event.

The chair of the group, Norman Thomas, has also highlighted concerns of racial tensions in the area ahead of the march.

He told KoS: "This group are white supremacists countering the Black Lives Matter movement to say white lives are superior to black ones.

"They demonstrate a horrible form of racism – similar to those who took part in the Dover demonstrations – and politicians will say these things should be ignored.

"But if you ignore people, you are saying it's OK to express horrible racist sentiments.

"These groups are essentially targeting problem areas in Kent where there is high unemployment and a lot of discontent and unhappiness about people's conditions.



UGLY: Tempers boiled over during demonstrations in Dover earlier this year which resulted in a number of arrests. Pic: Kent Anti-Racism Network

"They will then scapegoat foreigners and say this is why things are bad for you. There have been multiplying racist incidents in Thanet, where for example Asian shopkeepers have been abused, and the group are trying to exploit these feelings.

"Unless these people are opposed they will just keep trying."

Labour councillor – and former Thanet District Council leader, Iris Johnston, who represents the Margate Central ward – has expressed concerns about safety on the day.

She explains: "Although I may be appalled by the views of the White Lives Matter group, they have a right to protest.

"The only issue is that any event or march that takes place is well managed. The big event taking place on the same day is Margate Beach Cross – where we will have a number of expert riders on our beach – so it is vital that all things taking place are properly organised."

Following on from the chaotic march through Dover on January 30, Tower Hamlets ward Ukip councillor Ben Glayzer has highlighted unease still felt by residents in the area.

"I've heard from constituents that they want to move away because of these marches and its certainly brought the town down.

"At this time Dover is going through a lot of regeneration and we need tourism, but these marches have a lot of impact on local businesses.

"When one of the marches happened here a member of staff told me that the Sports Direct store lost a few thousand pounds and had to close early, and residents have told me they feel threatened to go into town when these marches are arranged.

"There's a great feeling of unrest from constituents about why it seems to be happening so much here.

"Personally I wish these marches didn't happen judging by how past protests have caused real upset."

He added: "People have a right to protest, but it's the way they protest."

Kent Police say they are aware of the march and music event being held on the same day.

A spokesperson said: "Kent Police has a legal obligation to enable peaceful protest and has a great deal of experience in planning for and facilitating of such events.

"Anyone travelling to the area with the intent of committing an offence should be aware that officers will be proactive in tacking action against those who do not act lawfully."

Organisers of the White Lives Matter march were contacted for comment by failed to respond.

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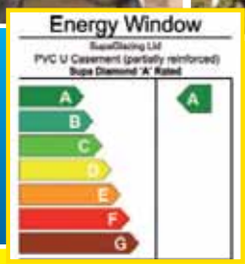


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KCC BUDGET

Dire warnings as more cuts cost jobs and tax rise for KCC

County Hall chiefs delivered plans for next year's budget this week and it once again paints a picture of a local government struggling to survive in the face of swingeing funding cuts...

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

LOCAL authorities could be heading for an "absolute disaster" if better deals aren't negotiated with central government, a council chief has warned.

Kent County Council this week outlined plans to slash £108m from its budget in an attempt to balance the books, which would see up to 400 jobs go across all of the county's services, except in schools.

Council tax will also rise to the maximum amount before triggering a local referendum.

While not all of these will be compulsory redundancies, it is another indication of the dire straits KCC finds itself in, as corporate director of finance and procurement Andy Wood, and cabinet member John Simmonds, told KoS of the lack of understanding from central government of the immense pressure put on councils across the country.

With funding in the form of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) being slowly reduced year-on-year until it dries up completely in 2020, councils are having to become self-sufficient, though plans are in place to allow them to fully retain business rates – a major source of income, but one complicated by businesses appealing the rateable value of their properties, often leading to smaller returns.

Mr Wood believes a proposed deal to make authorities responsible for attendance allowance benefits, primarily aimed at those aged over 65 which helps to pay care costs, and currently awarded by the Department for Work and Pensions, could be the final nail in the coffin if other support is not made available.

"Attendance allowance and business rates don't go hand-in-hand, but that's one of the options they're talking about," he said.

"We get no policy decision making over attendance allowance, so if Brexit has the downside that some people say, and business rates start to drop, attendance allowance is only going one way, because it's pretty much based on the number of older people in your county.

"If all of our RSG disappears, and we get given new responsibilities that are going to add a cost pressure, and the means of funding and business rates start to drop, that's when it could be absolutely disastrous for local government.

"That's what we're desperately trying to have an influence on to ensure that doesn't happen.

"We've been really good at guessing [the level of funding through government grants] until last year, which was the most seismic shock across local government.

"When they announced the figures everyone thought they'd missed something, it couldn't be real, and there was widespread panic - our cut was about £14m worse than we thought

"When you look at the last six years, living on less money as local government has to do, and you've had to explore every corner of the services you provide and when you're looking at every corner of every service it's really hard work.

"A huge amount of effort has gone into what I think is a very successful period where we haven't had to say to people 'we can't give you homecare any more, we're not going to take your kids to school on the bus' and the vulnerable have been protected.

"We don't think [the government] fully recognises the pressures we face – if we just take National Living Wage, the impact that's had on us in terms of price increases with all of our providers, it's tens of millions."

For the fourth consecutive year, the authority is proposing an increase in council tax of 1.99 per cent plus an additional two per cent social care precept, first introduced by then-chancellor George Osborne last year.

This would mean the KCC precept on a Band C property increasing from £1,007.60 to £1,047.84 – a rise of around 80p per week for residents, but worth a collective total of £23.7m to the council in terms of helping balance the books.

Mr Wood said: "Nobody puts council tax up lightly, but on that balance what would you do? Ask people to pay 80p a week more or find £24m elsewhere? It's really difficult to find that balance.

"If you could get to people and explain what paying another 80p a week would mean versus what would have to happen if you didn't, I think people would vote for an increase, but you can't get to 600,000 households and explain it."

Adult social care is proving a particular strain on resources, with an increase in demand and cost of services outweighing savings of £13.3m KCC intends to make.





PAIN: County Hall in Maidstone is Kent County Council's headquarters and where the key budgets for following years are being drawn up. Senior KCC officer Andy Wood, above right

Council chiefs say there has been no indication so far that social care funding through the two per cent precept would disappear and admitted their ideal early Christmas present when Philip Hammond presents his Autumn Statement on November 23 would be bringing forward the Better Care Fund [a pot of cash originally designated for health that can be used for social care].

"That fund is going to bring us in £17m in 2018/19 and £33m the following year," Mr Wood said.

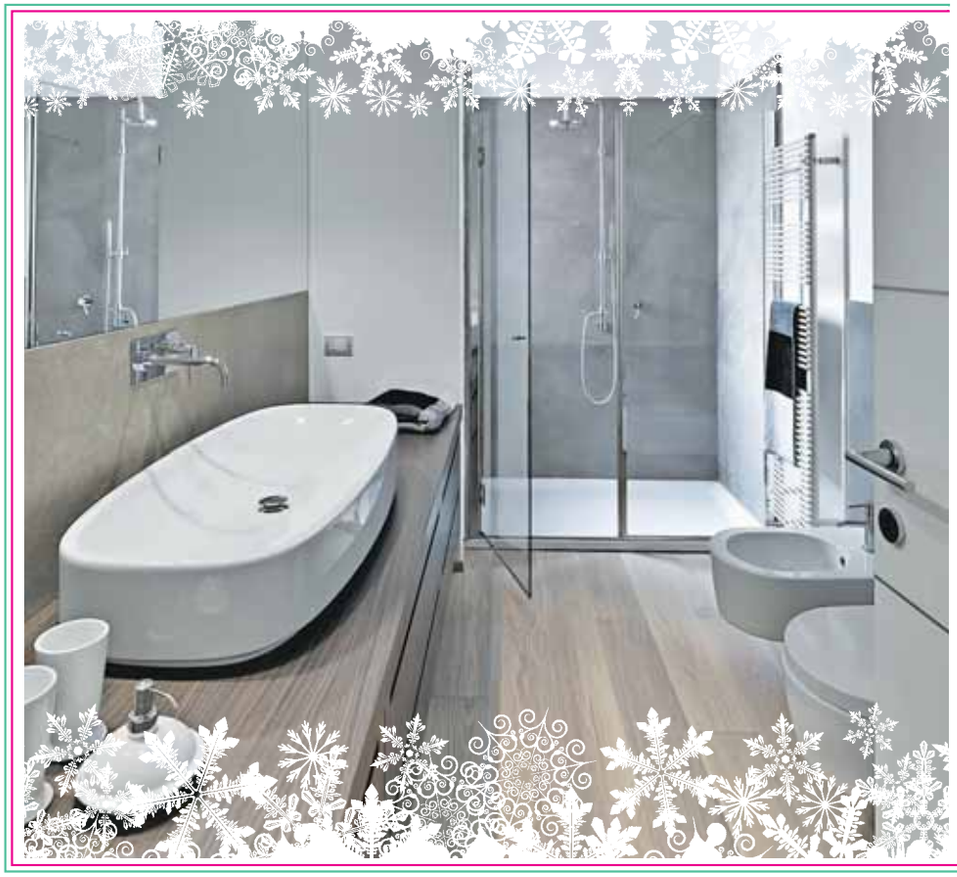
"We've asked if they can bring that forward because we can't wait another 18 months for that extra funding to become available.

"We're hoping it comes with no strings and we believe it's a genuine attempt to recognise that if social care can't be properly delivered, the impact on health is enormous, and vice-versa.

"At the moment, that isn't as seamless as it should be.

"This fund, if we had that now, we could start

Continued on page 16



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KCC BUDGET

Continued from page 15

to deal with some of the pressures we're facing because if you keep taking £80m out every year for six years, there is a limit somewhere and we're getting really close to it.

"If we hadn't started transformation plans and programmes three or four years ago, we'd be where Lancashire and Northamptonshire are now and that's hitting a brick wall with nowhere to go, having to rely on two years of reserves.

"Unless they do something drastic they're in serious trouble, and we don't want to be in that position."

KCC leader Paul Carter added: "We started this journey to save hundreds of millions of pounds in 2010 and, by managing this sensibly, we have already saved more than half a billion pounds over the past six years.

"The government has placed an enormous challenge on us by imposing on local government some of the biggest cuts compared to other parts of the public sector.

"With forward planning and facing the challenge early on we are now in a better position than most.

"We totally understand that some transformational plans take many years to implement.

"We are forward-thinking, have made intelligent commissioning decisions and have the situation in hand.

"Despite these huge challenges, we are determined to continue to make Kent a great place to live and work, seeing the population grow and attracting new businesses."

Gordon Cowan, Labour leader on KCC, told us he shared Mr Wood's fears of what could happen to councils in the coming years.

"By 2020, it is my view that we will be waiting for the first local authority to go to the wall," he said.

"It will happen because there is just no light at the end of the tunnel.

"While its true on paper that the local Conservative administration have not yet cut any frontline services, I think they soon will."

Ukip leader Roger Latchford was unavailable for comment.

A consultation has been launched to gauge public views ahead of the Autumn Statement, and a meeting of the full council next Thursday will discuss the plans further.

Details of the consultation and how to take part can be found at www.kent.gov.uk/budget

FOSTERING CRISIS ADDS FURTHER PRESSURE ON COUNTY HALL

MR Wood and Cllr Simmonds also identified a fostering crisis as a major threat to the council's budget.

Kent having to take the vast majority of unaccompanied child asylum seekers that arrive in Britain means resources are being stretched, with the government's current voluntary dispersal system not helping in easing the pressure, though Mr Wood did suggest a mandatory system could be on the cards in the near future.

"We will be a reception centre, so if so many per week come over from Calais, go into the reception centre, we'll assess them over 7-14 days and they'll be dispersed to wherever is appropriate for them," he told KoS.

"If they've got family elsewhere, say in Birmingham, they usually still come to us first. We're fully expecting the Home Office to recognise the problems we face; there's very frequent correspondence between us and them telling them they've got to pay up.

"They need a dispersal system that's going to work and they say they will make it a compulsory system. You can make that but who decides which authority is going to take the child? We're well versed in looking after these kids, but some haven't got any, they haven't got the infrastructure in place, and that takes money to set up."

Cllr Simmonds added: "Kent has very much been on the firing line with regards to looking after children. The amount of agency foster workers we have to use does push the budget up considerably. We're conveniently placed – they say 'Kent you look after them and we'll sort a disposal programme'.

"It all looks very good on paper but unless the government gives some incentives to other authorities, why should they?"

However, the difficulty doesn't come purely from numbers of asylum seeking children from Calais, but also a population overspill from the capital, where London boroughs place their children in Kent.

A notable recent case was when Redbridge council outbid Canterbury council for 200 homes at the old Howe Barracks in the city, leaving local families on the authority's waiting list having to remain patient for even longer.

Cllr Simmonds said: "We are a convenient dropping off point for Londoners - we've got about 1,500 London children located in Kent.

"That puts pressure on fostering and means we struggle to recruit and have to go out to agencies which cost twice as much so that brings in a lot of pressure.

"London boroughs are responsible for the pure social services, but we've got to educate them and it takes up foster carers from Kent.

"Our bone of contention is the London authorities get up to two-and-a-half times more per adult, per child than we get, so no wonder they can afford this."

Mr Wood added: "We've got 1,500 kids who we have to care for because their parents can't and you think 'I'd love to live in a county where we didn't have to look after any kids', that'd save us £120m but it's not going to happen.



"If we could get 100 children out of care, that would save £5m, whereas to find £5m by cutting services. There's only so many people in the county who want to foster kids. Half of them will go to fostering agencies because they get paid more, so we've exhausted our supply, pretty much exhausted the fostering agency supply - where do you go if you've got no foster carers?

"You've got to put them in residential care, which is not right for a kid and very expensive."

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TEAM: Queen poses with Corps of Royal Engineers at Brompton Barracks on Thursday to mark their 300th anniversary.
All photos courtesy of PA.

Blue's the colour as the Queen visits barracks





THE Queen paid a visit to Kent on Thursday morning – a day which saw her became the longest-reigning living monarch on the planet.

It followed news earlier in the day that Thailand's King Bhumibo Adulyadej – revered in Thailand as a demigod and an anchor of stability through decades of upheaval – has died. He was 88 and had been on the throne for 70 years. The Queen now assumes that title having served in her role for 63 years.

Her Majesty arrived by helicopter in Chatham before touring the site of the Brompton Barracks in an open-top Land Rover.

She inspected 140 troops and viewed examples of heavy specialist equipment used by soldiers before meeting military personnel from the Corps of Royal Engineers, of which she is colonel-in-chief.

It was her first visit to the barracks in almost 10 years.

The Queen's most recent visit to the county was in March last year, when she was in Capel-le-Ferne, near Folkestone, to open The Wing at the Battle of Britain memorial to The Few.

She then moved on to Canterbury, where she unveiled statues of herself and the Duke of Edinburgh at the cathedral.



Licensing Act 2003
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Proposed Licensable activities: Live & Recorded Music – Sunday–Thursday 12:00–23:00; Friday–Saturday 12:00–00:00; Sale of Alcohol – Sunday–Thursday 07:00–00:00; Friday–Saturday 07:00_01:11

Date to make representations by: 3rd November 2016

The licensing applications can be inspected by appointment with the Licensing Team between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

Any objections to this application must be made in writing to The Licensing Department, Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne Kent, ME10 3HT

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application.

Any person who makes a false statement is liable, on summary conviction, to a maximum fine of £5,000

Pumpkin season is here and the demand has never been stronger



CROP: Jemma Thompson saw thousands pick their own from her farm

Halloween brings with it an enormous demand for the vegetable which is good news for the county's growers. **Emily King** visited a pumpkin patch and found out how our appetite is still growing and diversifying year on year

HALLOWEEN season may bring with it things that go bump in the night, but it also brings a massive surge for pumpkin growers.

And the good news for producers in Kent is a boom in sales over recent years as more people are buying pumpkins not just to turn into lanterns, but also for culinary use.

William Alexander, owner of The Hop Shop in Sevenoaks, has been farming pumpkins for 15 to 20 years. He explained: "In recent years we have seen a steady increase in the buying of pumpkins for carving purposes, but we have also seen a big increase for culinary uses as pumpkins are so flexible in the way they can be used.

"Obviously pumpkins are an autumn fruit but we've noticed they're not just being purchased in October but all through the autumn season, meaning their use must be for cooking."

With the warm summer in Kent stretching into October, pumpkin farmers have been enjoyed something of a bumper crop – unlike last year when heavy rain meant much of the crop rotted before it could be eaten.

"They can't grow in cold, wet weather, but because of the beautifully warm weather this year, we are inundated with 60,000 perfectly big and orange pumpkins," says Jemma Thompson, spokesperson for Pick Your Own Pumpkins in Ashford.

Even though the majority of people consider pumpkins to be something they purchase in October, the industry has to work all year round to have the pumpkins ready for the Halloween season.

"The seeds are grown in glasshouses and then planted in May," explains Mr Alexander. "We then have to fertilise them, and control weeds with plastic protectors. A lot of the weed maintenance is done by hand, and we have to make sure they are watered regularly while also keeping frogs at bay. If you look after them properly, they will always grow rapidly."

Adds Jemma Thompson: "Because of how heavy pumpkins are, they can't be imported from elsewhere, meaning pumpkins in supermarkets and restaurants are always locally sourced.

"I think last year there were over four million pumpkins supplied to UK supermarkets from British farms and we alone supplied just over a million to the big supermarkets such as Asda, Morrisons, and Sainsbury's."

A representative from the British Growers' Association said: "The late arrival of summer has enabled the 2016 pumpkin crop to reach harvest

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DISPLAY: The Hop Shop in Sevenoaks and its diversity of the vegetable, above left, and the huge quantity of traditional pumpkins in Ashford, above right

in almost perfect conditions. The increase in the use of pumpkins for cooking has been great for the British farming industry, as sales have increased here, as well as having stayed steady for carving use, things are looking up. As long as the demand is there, pumpkin farming will always be beneficial to British farms because they cannot be brought in from elsewhere, they are always local."

There are many varieties of pumpkins, and some are tastier than others, as Jemma Thompson from Pick Your Own Pumpkin in Ashford told KoS: "Crown prince pumpkins [green], and ghost pumpkins [white] are usually tastier as they contain less pulp than ordinary orange pumpkins. Although, typical orange carving pumpkins can also be eaten, most notably in soup."

And it's not only the inside of a pumpkin that can be used in dishes.

"You can eat all of the pumpkin - except for its stalk," says Tessa Tricks from Hubbub, a charity dedicated to using pumpkins set to go to waste on the shelves of in the field.

"Whether you can eat the skin or not depends on the variety. Smaller varieties such as gem squash have deliciously edible skin, the skin of larger varieties may be too tough to eat or less than appealing. For types such as the butternut squash, whether you eat the skin or not is down to personal taste. Pumpkins are a great source of vitamins A and C, iron and riboflavin."

The charity uses the vegetables it collects, turns them into soups and other dishes and then sells them at festivals across the UK.

Rosie Collins, marketing manager for Macknade Fine Foods, in Faversham, says it has seen an increase in purchasing of pumpkin-infused foods from their stores.

She said: "Our café reflects the seasonal ingredients we sell in our shop so we will be using pumpkin on the menu this month. Last year our spiced pumpkin soup was extremely popular.

"We've noticed a lot more pumpkin recipes cropping up online this year too, and we've also produced a handful of pumpkin recipes for our website which we encourage our customers to use. Personally I'd suggest they toast the seeds and use those too."

While Nicola O'Neill, owner of The Cosy Kettle restaurant in Ashford, adds: "Last year I used various different variety of pumpkin and squash all supplied by Jemma at PYO Pumpkin Ashford and made batches of pumpkin soup and everyone loved it. I also passed on a few extra pumpkins I had to some local ladies that made pumpkin pie, which went down a treat.

"I think the food industry in general is very seasonal and people love the fresh local produce so it's never hard to sell pumpkin soup and produce through October and November."

As the culinary popularity of pumpkins grows, farmers have to make sure they have enough pumpkins to meet the demand.

Concludes Jemma Thompson: "Popularity is definitely growing. We started in this field two years ago mainly because we had a surplus of crops.

"That first year we opened it up to the public we were quite surprised by how many people came so the following year we thought we'd give it a go again. Last year we had just under 16,000 people, including adults and children, through the gates in just over 13 days. This year we're expecting even more because Halloween occurs right at the end of the week."

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From West End theatres to a blooming business in flowers

One man's remarkable career switches from showbusiness to a cottage industry



By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

THERE can be few CVs which include management of West End theatres, overseeing tours for a host of stars from Sir Ian McKellan to Paul O'Grady and more medals from the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show than you could count on both hands.

Yet, unless you have a penchant for flower arrangement or, indeed, worked in London's theatre scene over the last 30 years, the chances are the name Mig Kimpton will mean little to you.

At 52 he's a friend to the stars whose hard work has delivered remarkable results. He worked his way up from his first job of working behind the bar at the Bristol Hippodrome to the hey day of summer season and sell-out Ken Dodd shows in Scarborough, to working to help prepare for the first ever performances of Andrew Lloyd Webber's Phantom of the Opera – a show which this month celebrates its 30th anniversary.

He's worked closely with Jeffery Archer at one venue, and tour managed the likes of Janet Street-Porter, Sandi Toksvig and Lesley Joseph.

In addition, he produced the Stonewall Equality shows at the Royal Albert Hall in the 1990s, huge high-profile charity fundraisers which featured the likes of George Michael, Elton John and Kylie Minogue.

Today, however, he continues in a career about-turn – switching from the world of theatre to concentrate fully on his flower arranging skills and managing some of the floral world's biggest shows.

And key to that is moving to Kent.

He lives with his partner in a picturesque white cottage in the village of Little Mongeham, located down country lanes between Deal and Dover.

Set in around an acre of ground and with a handful of outbuildings, it is far from the maddening crowd of London, where he lived for so long.

Sat in his front room, however, there is a distinct lack of the presence of the success that has surrounded his career so far – no sign of the Royal Horticultural Society awards from Chelsea – he has 11, four of which the coveted gold - or, for that matter many flowers.



SUCCESS: Mig Kimpton counts Paul O'Grady and Ian McKellan as friends

But this is, so far, a work in progress.

Having sold his home in Peckham, he moved here in the summer and three months in has big ambitions for the place.

He's planning to create a show garden on a patch of land at the front of the property currently studded by trees and rabbits.

One outbuilding is set to house a 12-pupil school where he can pass on his floral skills to budding arrangers and once his garden is complete he plans to stage a number of by-arrangement open days.

But from theatre to flowers? Why the big shift?

"It all stemmed from hitting 50 and having spent 30 years in theatre," he explained to KoS this week. "Flowers were always a sideline and a hobby and I managed both.

"But it got to the stage where they were no other jobs in theatre I really wanted.

"I thought I would miss theatre once I stopped doing it. But I didn't. I miss the free tickets, of course, but that's it. I don't miss the environments."

His last role in theatre was as executive producer at the Arts Theatre in London's West End. Within days of quitting he was approached by Aztec Events and asked to run the Blenheim Palace Flower Show – held in the grounds of Winston Churchill's childhood home in Oxfordshire.

That list has now grown. This week he launched a major show for the National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies in Blackpool. Next April alone he will be staging four shows in the same month.

"I'm really still in showbusiness," he says, "as putting on a flower show you have to build the venue, fill it, make it all work and make sure the visitors are happy. It's like putting on a show in a field."

Added into that is taking part in the biggest and most high profile shows as a competitor.

"I have obsessively competed at flower shows since 1996 and it does become compulsive," he explains.

"As a child I never won prizes, so to finally find in later life I can win prizes was special. And if you win sometimes a big cheque comes with it. It's the process, the planning,





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AMBITION: Mr Kimpton switched from a home in Peckham to a picturesque five-bedroom home near Deal where he has great plans to develop his floral arrangement business - and build a show garden



the design, the doing and the anticipation of waiting for the judges."

His success at Chelsea in floral art has delivered him the honour of doing the main stand for the National Association of Flower Arrangers in 2018 something he admits "I've wanted to do since I first went to Chelsea in the early 1990s".

Certainly while theatre may no longer be his focus, the contacts and friendships he made during his time in it, live on.

He drafted in Sir Ian McKellan, best known for his roles in Lord of the Rings and the X Men movies, to open the Blenheim show last year and the two remain good pals.

"I dragged him to Blenheim as a favour and he loved it. He wanted to do it again this year, but I had to tell him he had been superseded by Alan Titchmarsh.

"Some of the floral shows I've done, he's been a guest on stage and he's done flower arranging and we have a hoot."

The two met when Mr Kimpton was at the Playhouse in the West End. Back in 1987 it staged a one-man show by Sir Ian which the actor then wanted to take to the provinces.

"He asked if I could tour manage it. I pointed out I ran the theatre so couldn't and which point he just said, well tell them you're not available at the weekends.

"So I spent 13 weekends with him in the spring of 1988 with his one man show touring the UK. But it was not on a commercial basis; it was raising money for individual AIDS organisations, because there was a real crisis back then. He gave up his time for free and we raised over £100,000 for each regional organisation.

"He remains a life long friend and has dragged me to lots of places – willingly – such as Broadway.

"He's a bit grumpier now, but then I suppose that happens to all of us as we get a little older doesn't it?"

Presenter and comedian Paul O'Grady, who lives in Aldington, near Ashford, is another chum.

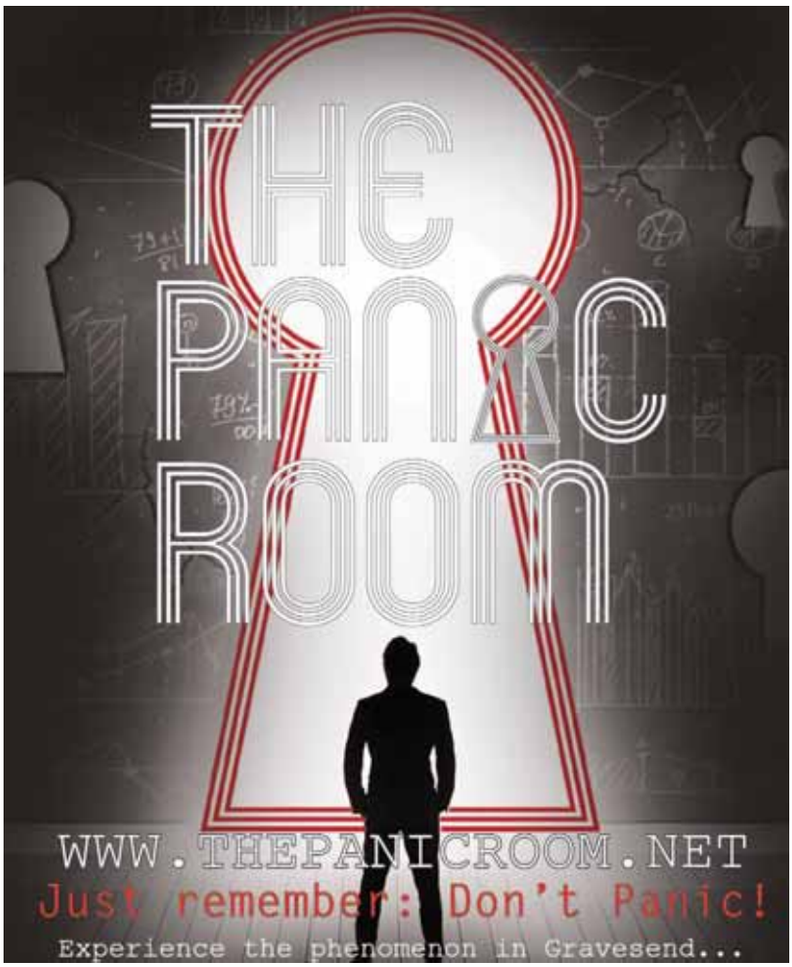
"I helped Paul make the transition of Lily Savage from the nightclubs where he was going down a storm to a wider audience. I was asked if I could help, as I was running a theatre, to set him up in the theatrical environment. And that was amazing. He was a brilliant, clever man and of course going on that first tour with him when nobody knew Lily Savage was incredible.

"However, I remember a day playing Cheltenham and every joke fell flat. They just did not get it at all. To this day, I've never seen a performer leave a venue as quick as he did. Paul literally came off stage, grabbed his bag, and went to sit in the car while we packed up because he was so annoyed it had gone badly.

"We're still friends and he hasn't changed at all. He is exactly the same as he was that night in Cheltenham. Except he can't walk down the street without people wanting to shake his hand. Back then we couldn't give the tickets away."

Mig Kimpton takes his Frozen Floral Roadshow out on tour next month with a special preview at St George's Church Hall in Deal on October 27 at 7.30. Tickets are on sale now.

For details on that and floral workshops, visit www.migkimptonflowers.co.uk.





WIN! Spooky week of Halloween adventure

Chance for one lucky winner to win a half term break at a leading adventure holiday site - normally worth £299

KENT on Sunday has teamed up with Kingswood Camps, one of the UK's leading children's adventure holiday providers, to give away a thrilling week at their fully inclusive Halloween Camp in Kent this October half term.

Normally worth £299, the camp is for youngsters aged 11-15 and runs between October 23-30.

Those taking part will get the chance to take on daily adventure challenges, from flying through the air on zipwires to learning to abseil, fence, and much more.

Evenings are crammed full of Halloween themed fun with discos, murder mystery games, night walks and stories by the campfire.

Plus, included in Kingswood Camps' Halloween Camp week is an excursion day to either Harry Potter Studios or The London Dungeons.

The lucky winner will either experience a world of wizardry with sets and costumes from the iconic film, Harry Potter, or discover what's lurking in The London Dungeons, and go on a 90 minute journey through



1,000 years of London's murky past.

Kingswood Camps provide safe and friendly environments for young people to meet new friends, grow in confidence, have fun and learn new and exciting skills.

With over 30 years' experience hosting fun-packed adventures, Kingswood is situated on the outskirts of Ashford.

To be in with a chance of winning simply answer the following question:

Q. Which young wizard attended Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry?

A. Harry Potter
B. Paul Daniels
C. David Blaine

But be quick, the competition closes on October 18.

How to enter and terms and conditions:



FUN: Push yourself and make new friends on the camp

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Texts cost 50p plus standard network rates. Winners will be selected from all correct entries. The promoter's decision is final. Usual terms and conditions apply. Entries received after the closing date will not be counted, but you may still be charged. Alternatively enter by post to Kingswood Half Term Camp Competition, Archant KOS Media, Kent House, Station Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PP, including your name, address, postcode and contact telephone number. The prize is for one person only.

By entering this competition you will automatically be subscribed to receive news and offers from Archant and Inspiring Learning. If you do not wish to receive details of any other products or services, please text EXIT at the end of your message. Service Provider: JMedia UK Limited, SW4 7BX. Tel: 0207 720 7130.

■ To find out more about Kingswood Camps and their Halloween Camp, visit kingswoodcamps.co.uk.





GLITZ: Stephen Mulhern, above, and War Horse comes to Canterbury, right

Extravaganza marks five colourful years

Review: by Adele Couchman
adele.couchman@archant.co.uk

WHEN the Marlowe Theatre unveiled its shiny new look five years ago there was a collective inhalation of breath. Could it deliver the bigger audiences, the diversity of programme and the big name shows it had promised?

The truth was it did just that and more. And last weekend it celebrated its success with a gala performance, on top of a weekend of free events which showcased everything from poetry to West End touring productions.

And, like the last five years, it proved a flurry of colour, song and dance as it touched upon everything from comedy, classical music to musicals and ballet to pantomime.

Opened by a reading from the poet Lemn Sissay, there was an adaptation of a ballet performance of Jane Eyre and solo performances by three young instrumentalists and a splash of opera.

Then an excerpt from Chicago lightened the mood with teenage dance group ZooNation showcasing its hip-hop moves.

A highlight was a special appearance by the National Theatre's War Horse – a taste of what is to come when the Marlowe hosts the launch of the UK tour next year with a lengthy residency. It is precisely the sort of performance the theatre hoped to attract when it emerged from its building cocoon in 2011.





With panto dame Ben Roddy the host for the evening, there were also star turns from EastEnders' Shaun Williamson and CBeebie's Mister Maker Phil Gallager.

It was a fitting celebration of a glorious first five years.



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SEE PAGE 31

What should you do with garden veg in colder weather?



SEE PAGE 32

Five top tips for brightening up dark or gloomy rooms



Homes & Gardens

Help your home flourish in autumn

Read our guides to moving your plants and veg around your garden, and how to brighten up your home...



WELCOME to our latest edition of Homes and Gardens.

We are now, well immersed in autumn, with Halloween just around the corner, and so this is the time to prepare your garden and home as the nights draw in.

The days are now short enough that we drive to work while the sun is coming up, and return home in the near-dark. This leaves little time for gardening and decorating, but with this guide, we've made the tasks easier with top tips and advice.

Autumn doesn't seem like the best time of year to plant new garden vegetables, but why not move around the vegetables already planted to give them their optimum sunshine?

Or maybe your focus should be on how to make the most of the limited natural light within your home?

You may as well take every opportunity of light you can, as it's not going to be our friend until, at the earliest, the beginning of next year. We all next a little extra vitamin D in the cold weather.

In this edition, we'll be sharing a gardener's expertise of making the most of the veg you've already planted, and where in the garden would best suit certain plants.

To find out more, turn to page 31.

For those of you who like to do your own decorating instead of getting someone in to do it, our five top tips on how to brighten and lighten your home could prove valuable.

Whether it's by changing the colour of the walls, or the furniture inside, we've advised on it.

To find out more, turn to page 32.

If you think you've missed your chance for the apple season, don't worry you're in luck as we have a guide on how to plant and grow them in a plant pot.

To find out more, turn to page 33.

We hope you enjoy this supplement and it gives you in the insight you need for your home to flourish in autumn.



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A moving experience this autumn

By Hannah Stephenson
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

ARE your borders looking overgrown and overcrowded? If some of your stalwart shrubs and perennials have outgrown their space or simply aren't thriving in their current position, it may be time to move them.

The best time to transplant shrubs is while they are dormant, between late autumn and early spring. Choose a day when the ground isn't frozen or waterlogged.

There's always a risk when you move plants and the larger the plant, the more risk there is that you'll lose it. But there are ways to minimise that risk.

Small herbaceous perennials and compact shrubs are relatively easy to move if you water them thoroughly and then dig them up with as much root as possible, repositioning them somewhere where there's more room or where conditions are more favourable. Water them in well and keep them well watered during the autumn in the absence of rainfall.

Mature shrubs are harder work to move, but it's best to do it after a bout of rain. Get a friend to help you if the shrub is extremely large.

Generally those that move most easily are the ones with fibrous roots - masses of thin roots which remain shallow in the soil. More problematic to move are those with tap roots, which are much thicker and there are fewer of them. It's difficult to move these without breaking the roots.

First, decide where you are going to replant any large shrubs. Dig a hole slightly bigger than the root ball of soil is going to be and add organic matter to the soil as well as slow-release fertiliser.

For trauma-free transplanting of large shrubs, first make a wide circle at least 30cm from the shrub with a spade and dig a deep trench following the circle's curve.

Use a garden fork to loosen the earth around the ball of the roots, then gently fork the surplus earth from around the roots.

If the stems or branches of the shrub are unwieldy, tie them loosely with garden string so they don't snap off or get damaged during the excavation.

Once the ball of roots has been loosened, dig your spade under the root ball as far as you can, levering gently as you go around the circle. The aim is to keep as large a root ball attached to the plant as possible.

When you feel the shrub move, tilt it to one side and slide a length of plastic sheeting or sacking underneath the root ball. Tilt the shrub the other way and manoeuvre the sacking so that it comes underneath the whole root ball, then wrap it up and tie it around the trunk securely, to minimise water loss and keep the root ball and soil intact.

Unwrap the sacking and carefully place the shrub in its original depth. There should be a distinct soil mark on the shrub, so it's easy to gauge. Fill the hole with displaced soil, firm in gently with the ball of your foot to get rid of any air pockets and give it a good soaking. Water regularly until the plant becomes established and mulch with organic matter. Large shrubs may need support for a year or two.

Some plants react better to being moved than others. Those which are easier to move include rhododendron and azalea, hydrangea, hebe, fuchsia, Choisya ternata and forsythia.

Peonies don't really like being relocated and it may take a couple of years before they flower again. Shrubs which don't like being transplanted include ceanothus, berberis, holly, eucalyptus, buddleia, cotoneaster, weigela and lilac. But even if they suffer leaf fall after moving, don't give up on them because they may come round.

Top Tip - Storing vegetables: If you're groaning under the weight of tomatoes, my best advice is to cook them into a passata or spaghetti sauce and freeze them in containers. French beans, sweetcorn, autumn cauliflowers and peas can be blanched and frozen.



VITAL: Keeping the plants you move watered is vital to their survival



SUNLIGHT: Moving plants to make sure they have the best light opportunities can help survival



Five tips for making dark rooms lighter

By Julia Gray
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

WHEN decorating a room, you want to make the most of the natural light, but when that's lacking there are some alternative options. Here are Julia Gray's five top tips for making a dark room lighter.

1. Any room can be made to feel lighter simply by painting the ceiling white, so it reflects light instead of absorbing it. Specialist emulsions can help even more. Dulux Ultra White Matt emulsion (from £24.98 for 2.5ltr) is not only a really white, it's also 20 times tougher than standard Dulux emulsion. Most importantly, Ultra White contains special light-reflective particles that reflect up to twice as much light back into the room as standard Dulux emulsion. For soft, subtle colours, try Dulux Light + Space Matt emulsions (from £20.99 for 2.5ltr), which contain the same light-reflective particles. North-facing rooms are most challenging to decorate because the natural light is cold. For this reason, avoid cold colours and stick to warm ones, such as yellows and creamy neutrals.

2. One of the best ways to brighten up a kitchen is with pale high-gloss unit doors, as these bounce light around the room. High-gloss kitchens never seem to go out of fashion, so glossy doors are a great way to update the room and needn't be expensive. In any dark room, but especially kitchens and bathrooms, it's important to have good artificial lighting because you may need it on when it's dark outside.

3. In other rooms, consider going for glossy or mirrored furniture, and hanging mirrors on the walls - opposite a window will maximise the light coming in and make the room feel bigger. And don't forget the floor - white-painted floorboards, or shiny white floor tiles in kitchens and bathrooms, will help to bounce light around.

4. Replacing, enlarging or adding windows can make a big difference to how light a room is, but it's an expensive and disruptive solution to the problem, and planning rules can restrict what you do. Changing the window treatment is usually much cheaper - swap fussy curtains for sleek roller blinds and you'll let in more light.

5. Another radical solution is to remove a wall. Knocking two rooms into one usually gives the new room more windows and it may get sunlight for most of the day if, say, it's now both east facing (morning sun) and west facing (evening sun).

How to: If you're decorating a room with a picture rail and want to use different colours, it's easy to paint the wall above the picture rail a different colour to the rail itself because the join will be out of sight, and it's easy to paint the picture rail and the wall below the same colour. If you don't, you'll have to do a neat join by hand along the bottom of the picture rail, which isn't particularly easy and will be very visible, or use masking tape, which can cause problems, namely paint bleed and tearing the paint when you remove it.



HIGHLIGHTING: White and yellow colours will make any room seem lighter

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The apple is the gardener's favourite

By Hannah Stephenson
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

WHETHER you're into a crisp crunch, a sweet, juicy flavour or the tart tang that makes a crumble or pie a dessert to savour, the apple is among the gardener's favourite.

We grow more apples both commercially and in the garden than any other fruit tree. But you don't have to have a massive space to get to the core of success, because you can grow apples in pots, although you'll need to give them more tlc than you would to trees in the ground.

Pot-grown trees may produce fewer fruit than those grown in the ground, but they can be grown on paved areas and courtyards in the smallest gardens.

Fill the pot to a level where the graft union of the fruit tree will be above the surface of the compost once it is planted. You will need to anchor a thick bamboo cane into the bottom of the container to support the tree.

You will also need to make sure the container is stable since, particularly when the tree is in leaf. Containers with a narrow base are therefore best avoided. If you put a stake in the pot, then you may be able to anchor it from the top to a nearby fence.





MOISTURE: You need to find ways to maintain water in the soil

The RHS recommends the following culinary apples for growing in containers: 'Arthur Turner' and 'Howgate Wonder', while its dessert apple recommendations include 'Alkmene', and 'Discovery'.

With any pot-grown tree, don't make the mistake of potting into too large a planter too soon. A snug pot will not only keep the tree small and manageable, it should also force it into producing a good crop of fruit long before a similar tree that is planted in open soil.

According to fruit tree specialist Ken Muir it may be tempting to put a small plant into a large container straight away, but this is not advisable, as the volume of compost in relation to the roots is too great to create water movement and air circulation through the soil.

The vital thing is to keep container-grown trees well-watered. Add water-retaining granules to the soil or underplant with spring bulbs or shallow-rooted plants that will keep weeds down and moisture in.



JUICY: You'll have fewer apples but they'll still be sweet and crunchy



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THEATRICAL: Lee Mead won BBC's Any Dream Will Do and has continued with West End success

West End's Lee promises Some Enchanted Evening

The BBC talent show winner is back with a new album and a tour to match...

HAVING won BBC's Any Dream Will Do talent show, and therefore taking on the role of Joseph in Andrew Lloyd Webber's Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, Lee Mead was destined to be a West End success.

Now the performer is back with a new album, Some Enchanted Evening and a national tour to match.

Looking back on his past accomplishments, Mr Mead explains why he decided to enter the BBC show, saying: "I'd been working in the theatre industry for about five years before the show but I'd never managed to be cast as lead.

"When the opportunity came up, I couldn't let it pass. Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat was the first musical I saw when I was nine, and when the show's advert showed on my TV at home I just really wanted to do it. I felt compelled to do it, but purely for the role."

Mr Mead's new album is full of '40s and '50s musical theatre hits but covered in his own style.

"The album has been placed in the top 20 of the album charts and the idea behind the album was because I just really wanted to explore those songs and that style," says the singer.

"There's a few extra contemporary songs in there as well, but when it comes to touring, I feel like October is the right time."

Mr Mead has recently been staring in the touring production of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, which has been getting his vocals ready for his own tour.

Speaking of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, he says: "I love the film, and I always wanted to be Dick Van Dyke. Plus I got to fly a car nine times a week.

"There's actually also a song from Chitty Chitty Bang Bang on my album, Some Enchanted Evening."

Rehearsals and bandcalls have been taking place for Mr Mead and his musicians over recent weeks but he stresses that there's no need to learn any words.

"The songs are in my head, with the rehearsals we just go back to the songs again for a refresh," he says.

"I perform alongside a five-piece band, and I've been playing with the guys for around four or five years now. We have a brilliant violinist who really brings an essence of the era to the show. Musically, he just sounds great."

When it comes to touring, though, Mr Mead isn't so keen: "I used to love it but I'm not in my 20s anymore and I'm a dad. I try not to be away too much. I was gone for five months with Chitty and that was exhausting.

"But with this tour I have a lot of one nighters so I can come home often. I enjoy touring but not too long term."

Mr Mead told KoS what he'd like his audience to gain from watching him perform in concert, he said: "I just want people to enjoy it. The songs are so great and each one tells a story of its own, which essentially is all you want from a song.

"It's nice to influence people and to watch them enjoying themselves."

Some Enchanted Evening comes to the Assembly Hall, Tunbridge Wells, on October 27.

For tickets, visit assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk

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Women Seeking

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JULIE, 53yrs, tall slim dark haired lady, sociable and fun loving. New to the area so WLTM men friends for fun, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424497**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3002 Box 419673**

ANGELA, 48yrs, seeks male companion for nights out, dining, maybe more. ACA or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424495**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715**

HELEN, mid 50s naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424493**

KERRY, 35yrs, married in open relationship, attractive, tall, slim and very presentable. Seeks discreet gent any age for casual pleasurable encounters. **Tel: 0906 515 3042 Box 422363**

JACKIE, 56yrs, attractive lady who is lots of fun seeks like-minded gent for nights in, days out and much much more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424491**

HI Gents, I'm Kelly, a down to earth lady, 35yrs, shapely brunette, seeking someone with GSOH, looks unimportant, any age. ACA. I promise! **Tel: 0906 515 3026 Box 423035**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399**

PRESENTABLE divorced lady, young 60, many interests, animal lover, seeks outgoing, cheerful, honest, smart looking man, for cultural times. **Text only Mailbox: 5576629**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3022 Box 421375**

WENDY, 44yrs, dark haired beauty with blue eyes and a fab figure. WLTM gent any age, give me a call and I promise to call you back, or text/email. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424339**

SUSIE, 36yrs, attractive, tall slim blonde seeks fifty shades of grey with discreet gent, must have a fun side looks unimportant. **Tel: 0906 515 3038 Box 424045**

MELANIE, 49yrs, varied interests, attractive, sensual lady seeks gent any age or status, call, see what happens. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424337**

CALLING all Gentlemen! I'm Janet a mature solvent stylish lady, I'm waiting for you to call me so we can wine/dine and have some good times ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424335**

50YRS, old attractive lady. Sheila, caring honest, seeks discreet gent. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422469**



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TARA, 35yrs, own business, well educated dark haired curvy lady. Independent with no ties seeks "normal" chap for mutual pleasure. **Tel: 0906 515 3034 Box 424385**

HI I'm Angie, attractive petite mid 50s lady. I'm a very very active lady, with lots of interests. WLTM chap with GSOH, looks/age unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424333**

DANNI 34yrs black married lady looking for no strings fun with white man, any age. **Box: 4064145**



HELLO Gents, I'm a mature attractive interesting lady, with gorgeous eyes. I'm smart, sophisticated, love theatre and films. Give me a call or text me. Looks unimportant, must be kind. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424331**

SUSIE, 42yrs loves life, educated, brunette, own home, works to hard and now wants some fun. If you are a kind gent 30+ then text me for a chat. **Box: 4187170**

WIDOW, 62, short, looking for friendship at present, interested? Ha ha got to phone to find out more! Call Jan. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424195**

DIANNA, petite blonde lady, 38yrs, divorced, no kids, wants to spice up her life with new male friends, 35+, might lead to more who knows but no strings. ACA. **Box: 4027026**

RETIRED lady, an outgoing person, enjoys life, likes meals out, holidays, WLTM someone to share interests with, and quality time. **Text only Mailbox: 5552642**

LESLEY, 66, retired beauty therapist, blonde hair, blue eyes, size 14, likes going out, travelling, holidays, arts, looking for a nice guy, 57-67, would be great to get a reply. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424147**

SINGLE lady, 65, blonde, quiet nature, likes the outdoors, picnics, jiving, WLTM single gentleman for companionship and possible romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423411**

WIDOW, 70s, brown hair and eyes, likes walking, pub lunches, places of interest, good company and lots more, seeking a kind genuine male, a n/s, 70-80. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423359**

KIND lady, 50s, been broken hearted, seeks kind, genuine man for caring relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 419889**

GENUINE lady, 67, slim, GSOH, caring, honest, active, likes most things in life, days out, countryside, animals, long walks, visiting interesting places, cooking and holidays, WLTM a caring, honest male with GSOH, 67-73, with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423289**

PAT, petite blonde lady, GSOH, young looking for her age, seeks genuine gent any age with GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422393**

KIM, 50, lovely kind, 5ft 6, brown eyes, dark curly hair, curvy figure seeks nice genuine guy for LTR, same age as me. **Text only Mailbox: 5512493**

RITA, , seeks a genuine male for friendship, days out, she's very friendly, genuine and social, give her a call ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422403**

NICE female looking for decent genuine male for friendship to start out with. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4710874**

Men Seeking

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HI I'm Andrew, 5'9, slim longish hair WLTM men aged 55-80 for daytime fun. Bi-curio. Sittingbourne **Text only Mailbox: 5469911**

JOHN, 42yrs sophisticated business man wanting a lady by his side to spoil and entertain. Looks unimportant but must have a super personality and kind manner. **Box 4086072**

ANDY, tall attractive male, looking for a naughty female, for fun with no strings attached. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424295**

MALE, 52, quiet nature, likes coastal walks, cinema, reading, WLTM lady for friendship and maybe romance. East Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424211**

RICHARD, 64, n/s, from Kent, medium build, clean shaven, likes classic cars, days out, meals out, boot fares, most things, would like to meet a lady for company and to share each others interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424207**

MALE smoker, seeks female 40-69 for LTR **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 391702**

JOHN, 70, widower, lives in Broadstairs, Kent, slim, fit, active, young at heart, kind, caring and loving, likes country/beach walks, holidays, days out, theatre, eating out, music, animals, WLTM slim, attractive lady, to share interests and nice times together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424043**

48YR old divorced male, 6ft, well built, seeks lady for fun and laughter. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 380789**

MERRY, widow, dark hair, kind and caring, hoping to meet a kind gent for friendship, possibly more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422339**

BARBARA, is a caring lady who seeks a man to care for, she will do anything to make you happy. Just give her a call today. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422411**

GENUINE, GSH, attractive, outgoing professional female, 55. Enjoys keeping fit, socialising and travel, WLTM similar male for relationship. **Text only Mailbox: 5453851**

MATURE lady early 80s, family orientated, likes dancing, holidays especially cruising, WLTM similar aged gentleman with similar interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421427**

FEMALE, blue eyes, slim and pretty, from South Africa, young fifties, seeking a sincere, retired gentleman, who resides close to the sea. **Text only Mailbox: 5456242**

LIVELY old boy, OHAC, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68 yo. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621**

HELLO my name is Paul, 43, 5ft9, from Sittingbourne in Kent, looking for someone to have some fun with and see where it goes! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422905**

GENTLEMAN, 76yrs old, clean-shaven with a good head of hair and a smart dresser, hoping to meet lady for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423645**

DAVE genuine guy, 6ft, black hair, blue eyes, medium build, likes sports, gardening, music, seeks female with GSOH and genuine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 388372**

BRIAN, 6ft3, fit, bit grey but genuine and kind, looking for a naughty female, for no strings adult fun, if you're interested please get back to me, ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423483**

MALE, 53, 5ft6, single, hardworking, looking for slim/small lady, 40-56. Maidstone, Kent. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423363**

OUTGOING male, seeking attractive female, likes sports, music, cinema and nights out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414793**

49YR old male, 6ft, well built, seeks female to wine/dine and have fun with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 390929**

ANDREW, 50, slim to medium build, lives in Ashford/Kent area, WLTM a women, 40-70, for discreet fun, would be great to hear from you so get back to find out more! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423271**

GARY, 53, caring, likes snooker, bowls, looking for a nice woman to meet and fall in love with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423145**

EDWARD, 77, looking for a companion South East area of Kent, for holidays, days out, social events, and lots more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423039**

HAPPY go lucky divorced man, 48, 6ft, well built, seeks gorgeous female to share love and laughs with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 383719**

TONY black male, 58, 5ft6, med build, n/s, seeking a local mature fun loving female 40/75 in the Chatham/Gillingham area for discreet fun. **Text only Mailbox: 5459052**

BARRY 47, 6ft, well built, seeks female for wining, dining and fun times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 361787**

TALL single early 60's male looking for pure hearted lady for LTR. **Text only Mailbox: 5496781**

GARY 48, 6ft, well-built, dark hair, brown eyes, seeks passionate female for fun times in and out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 387175**

VINCENT 48, 6ft, well built, seeks lady for fun nights in and out. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 377397**

MALE, widower, n/s, would love to meet buxom friendly lady, up to 70, for friendship at first, interests include all types of music, walking, quizzes. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422957**

HELLO my name is Paul, 43, 5ft9, from Sittingbourne in Kent, looking for someone to have some fun with and see where it goes! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422905**

WRITER, tall, slim, fit, natural dark hair, generous, seeks lady for erotic rendezvous, I will make it worth your while! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422777**

SUGAR Daddy available! Mature, tall, slim, natural dark hair, seeks lady, age unimportant. Not afraid of commitment. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418889**

PHILLIP, 66, into farming and country life, looking for a loyal, genuine lady, someone I can trust, to go on holidays with and spend time together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422699**

LOCAL Sevenoaks man, seeks local lady for fun and friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417127**



TONY, early 60s, 6ft, slim, fit, easy going, looking for no strings fun with a lady, age unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422643**

HANDSOME male, mid 40s, dark hair, hazel eyes, wishes to meet appropriate female for fun, friendship and perhaps more, please get in touch if interested. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422587**

PAUL 52, seeks loving female for exciting times, meals out, weekends away, cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418077**

MALE, 54, shyish, looking for fun times with a lady, 60-70, with GSOH, status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422431**

PAUL 49 5ft 8ins likes eating/nights in/out seeks loving female for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 404013**

PROFESSIONAL, romantic male, 44, likes meals out, cinema, music, holidays, seeks female, 30-55 for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 250195**



CHRIS, from Folkestone, 71, 5ft9, widower, green eyes, lonely, n/s, OHAC, likes gardening, the coast, pubs, dining out, holidays, cruises, days out, WLTM similar lady to share interests, can travel. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422375**

PAUL GSOH, 5ft 8ins, medium build, seeking Miss Right for LTR to put the spark back into life. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 391970**

MIKE, 64, outgoing person, enjoys life, likes sport, cricket, nice meals out, holidays, WLTM someone to share interests and quality time. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422329**

COLIN, 56, 6ft, medium build, clean and tidy with a tidy beard, I'm after some TLC with no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422359**

Gay Seeking

Join our Gay online service **FREE** visit: **localgaydate.co.uk**

JAMES, 34, seeks dominant, slim, Canterbury/Thanet male, 30-40, likes reading, music, walking, films, eating out, nights in, looking for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424485**

TERRY, 54, bi curious, looking for mature male, 65+, for first time experience. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424109**

SLIM straight guy into CD and role-play, WLTM similar for friendship and fun. **Text only Mailbox: 5544057**

CD male, into wrestling, looking for CD, bi or gay male, 45-55, for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423833**

Friends

FEMALE seeking genuine straight female for daytrips, out to meet socially for lunch/coffee. **Text only to Mailbox No: 4748240**

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Wildlife TV presenter Steve Backshall's Wild World tour

By Emily King

emily.king@archant.co.uk

WILDLIFE children's TV presenter Steve Backshall embarks on a UK tour this October following the release of his new children's novel Shark Sea.

Mr Backshall reveals that his reasons for touring are not just for this new novel but also because "shark conservation is close to my heart."

"A lot of people ask 'why would you save a vicious animal like that?'," explains Mr Backshall. "But I like to help people learn to love them. I like to show them the wonder of sharks and their diversity."

Having encountered all sorts of wildlife over 18 years, Mr Backshall has a huge backlog of expeditions behind him.

He's wrestled sharks, crocodiles, footage of which will be shown on his tour, alongside outtakes and bloopers. He says he aims to "create a dazzling whistle-stop tour" but also jokingly tells KoS that his scariest expedition to date was getting married.



RISKY: Mr Backshall has tackled all kinds of animals including sharks and crocodiles

The TV presenter married Olympian rowing gold medallist Helen Glover at the start of September.

When it comes to his new children's novel, he says: "I wanted to write a series of extraordinary adventure books.

"The Falcon Chronicles are a mix of adventure and spy thriller with also an action crisis involved too. Shark Sea tackles the shark conservation crisis, and sends an important message to readers."

He continues: "The novels have had a huge response so far, and I'm the patron of 12 different wildlife charities. I hope my novels increase membership of these charities and also raises awareness. So far there's been 20,000 more people aware of the situations at hand."

Mr Backshall adds that the Falcon Chronicles story continues, saying: "My protagonists are still on the run, still being pursued, but this time they're out to sea and into the midst of adventure."

Mr Backshall embarks on his nationwide Wild World theatre tour from October 19 to November 20. His new children's novel Shark Sea will be published in October. To book tickets, visit www.stevebackshall.com/tour

Cubs and Scouts get discounted tickets via the ticket office.

Epic comeback from Busted



BUSTED, the pop trio, are back and have announced a UK headline tour which they are bringing to Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall in February.

Tickets went on sale on Friday from ticketmaster.co.uk

Gems night moves sites

GEMS, the night out for people with learning difficulties, has returned to its original site at Canterbury's Steinbeck & Shaw.

Admission costs £5 for service users and £4 for carers.

For more details, visit www.steinbeckandshaw.co.uk/canterbury

Iconic stars to visit Kent



POP idols Gerry and the Pacemakers will play in Margate in March 2017.

They will be coming to Theatre Royal on March 30.

For tickets, visit theatreroyalmargate.com

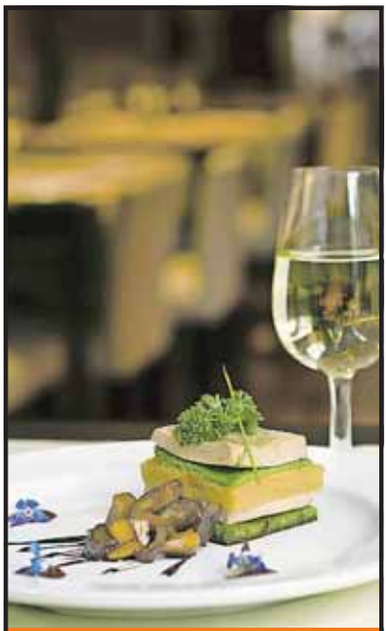
An infectious Halloween

CONTAGIOUS, The Canterbury Tales' Halloween event will return this year.

Groups visiting the attraction can dare to test their courage at the scare experience in the city's St Margaret's Church.

Contagious will take place from October 27-31. For tickets, visit canterburytales.org.uk.

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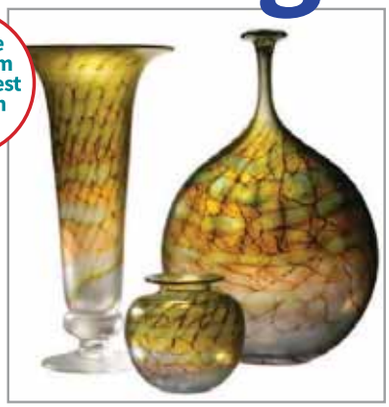
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Sell-out WW1 Show in Penge



THE Unknown Soldier is coming to Bridge House Theatre in Penge, Bromley, on November 12-13.

For tickets to the sell-out show email info@bhtheatre.com or call 020 8133 0311.

The Joy of Mincing

AUTHOR and performer Julian Clary's The Joy of Mincing has added a date at Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall on October 30.

The Joy of Mincing is the author, TV and radio star's celebration of 30 years as a camp comedian.

Tickets available via atgtickets.com

Birds With Broken Wings



SINCE the release of Birds With Broken Wings, Canadian folk musician Ben Caplan has announced he will be returning to the UK and is coming to Tunbridge Wells.

For tickets, visit twforum.co.uk

Live Aid co-creator's tour

MIDGE Ure, the man behind the '80s band Ultravox, co-creator of Live Aid/ Band Aid/ Live 8 with Bob Geldolf and the man behind songs Feed The World and Vienna has announced his new tour will come to Canterbury's Gukbenkian on October 30.

For tickets, visit uk.patronbase.com

Canterbury Festival '16 inspires artists to create

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk



ONE of the biggest cultural arts festivals in the South East, Canterbury International Arts Festival brings artists and performers from all over the world to Kent.

An independent charity, the festival aims to brings together a rich mixture of performing arts to delight audiences.

The festival inspires artists to create and perform. It commissions new work and champions emerging talent and supports those seeking careers in the cultural industries.

It aims to add financial and cultural wealth to the Canterbury district and to contribute to the wellbeing of its residents.

The festival has previously drawn audiences of more than 60,000 people of all ages to approximately 200 events.

Every year the festival hosts a wide range of events including music, theatre, dance, comedy, science, exhibitions, walks and talks.

This year, acts taking place during the festival include the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchesta, Gilbert O'Sullivan, Frankie Gavin, the Ivo Neame Quintet and the Oysterband, as well as theatre performances from dancer Alvin Ailey, The Wedding Reception, improvised musical Showstopper, the Made in Kent comedy competition, Vanity Bites Back, and Variety Soup.

The festival also offers many umbrella events such as a silk painting workshop, an Argentine tango class, harpist Lily Neill in concert, a performance of Pride and Prejudice, a creative writing workshop, and a craft market.

This year's festival is taking place from October 15 to November 5, in a range of venues with programmes available online.

Tickets can be purchased from the box office online via canterburyfestival.co.uk or by calling 01227 787787.

Tickets can also be purchased via Canterbury Christ Church University and the Gulbenkian.



SINGER: Gilbert O'Sullivan



CAPTIVATING: Jennifer Pike from Tchaikovsky Orchesta

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Russian State Ballet presents Swan Lake

The international dance company are bringing their production of the classic tale to Tunbridge Wells

THE Russian State Ballet and Opera House is renowned for its performances as well as the dedication and skills of its dancers and musicians.

Here *Emily King* speaks to one of the producers from the Russian State Ballet, Alexej Ignatow about how the show came together and what can be expected by audiences in Tunbridge Wells.

Mr Ignatow's role as producer means he oversees and plans everything. He has to organise everything from the Russian-side to the UK making sure all the elements run smoothly.

With the whole show being live, the coming together of the dancers and the orchestra must take some rehearsing to get right.

Mr Ignatow explains: "There are 400 to 500 people who work together on a daily basis for this company. We've been working like this for several year and so we fit together and rehearsals are quick.

"For the dancers and the band, a lot of the hard work has been done before hand. For example making sure they're fit, or making sure they're the best musician they can be."

When it comes to who takes on what role among the dancers, there's no audition process and it mainly comes down to who is available to tour at that time.

"We look at who is available, but also the characteristics the dancers have," says Mr Ignatow. "The ballet director decides, but they look at who is the best in shape and who is available. There are often last minute changes due to injuries of dancers."



ELEGANT: All dancers have to be synchronised

Performance days are busy for all involved, as the producer explains: "Everyone has quick rehearsals and warm-ups, then an actual ballet class for half an hour.

"Each stage is different so we always do a run through of moves and music so it aligns nicely on that particular stage."

Every aspect of the ballet shows take precision as Mr Ignatow explains: "Everything has to be spot on. We are the best which means we have to take things to the next level. Individuals have to be synchronised because it always looks more beautiful that way, and therefore we know the audience will appreciate it more.

"No one ever does a bad job. On the technical side there are 70 to 80 of us and we do this everyday so everyone knows their job inside-out."

Swan Lake is arguably one of the most loved and challenging ballets, not least thanks to Tchaikovsky's instantly recognisable and timeless score, but also ballet duets and quartets: Pas de Deux, and Pas de Quatre.

Swan Lake captures the full range of human emotions – from hope to despair and from melancholy to ecstasy.

The ballet comes to Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on October 23.

For tickets and more information, visit assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.

Jackson Live concert

JACKSON Live, is a recreation of the Michael Jackson concert experience, and the show is coming to Dartford's Orchard Theatre on December 1.

Jackson Live in Concert sees long-time fan Ben recreate the Michael Jackson experience with his renditions of all his favourite songs.

Tickets can be purchased from orchardtheatre.co.uk

Bromley escape game

OPERATION Escape opens at the Beechwood Centre, Bromley, on October 17.

Designed for 3 to 5 people, the players are locked in a room and have to solve puzzles and other challenges in order to find out how to escape. Many are based on systems used for decoding enemy messages during the Second World War.

To book, visit www.operation-escape.co.uk

Compared to What

CANTERBURY-based singer, songwriter Sarah-Jane Morris is releasing an album collaboration with fellow singer Antonio Forcione on October 26.

The album, Compared to What, was a creation brought about by a natural friendship between the passionate singers.

The ''thought-provoking'' album is, according to Ms Morris, reflective of the times we're in with regards to Brexit and refugees.

Sensational sixties

SEVEN legendary names will take to the Bromley's Churchill Theatre stage on October 27.

With the definite feel good factor this must see 60's show for 2016 stars Herman's Hermits, Chris Farlowe, The Swinging Blue Jeans, The Fortunes, The Ivy League, The New Amen Corner, Alan Mosca from Freddie and The Dreamers.

For tickets, visit churchillthreatre.co.uk



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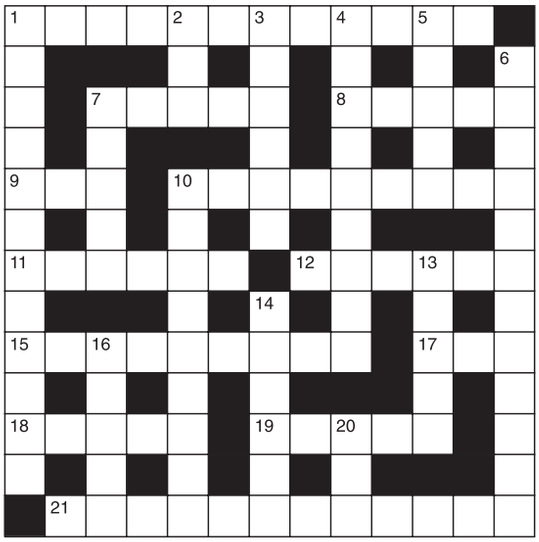
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PUZZLES

DOUBLE CROSSWORD



Quick

Across

1. Belie (12)
7. Kingdom (5)
8. Joy (5)
9. Sick (3)
10. Mediate (9)
11. Stir (6)
12. Oppose (6)
15. Disconcert (9)
17. Acquire (3)
18. Reason (5)
19. Smallest (5)
21. Casual (12)

Down

1. Splendour (12)
2. Epoch (3)
3. Distant (6)
4. Temperance (9)
5. Din (5)
6. Showy (12)
7. Memento (5)
10. Meddle (9)
13. Block of metal (5)
14. Hammer (6)
16. Leap (5)
20. Skill (3)

Cryptic

Across

1. Industrious form - artisans are members of it (7,5)
7. Near a reconstructed ring (5)
8. See 3 Down.
9. Herb used in the kitchen the French way (3)
10. She isn't as confused by rash behaviour (9)
11. Concentrated on where campers shelter (6)
12. Better footballer (6)
15. Where you'll find a record of the meeting very shortly (2,1,6)
17. Panel makers keep it inside (3)
18. Additional one in a crowd on the set (5)
19. Intoxicated but far from relaxed (5)
21. Produces a formal salutation and introduces the members (8,4)

Down

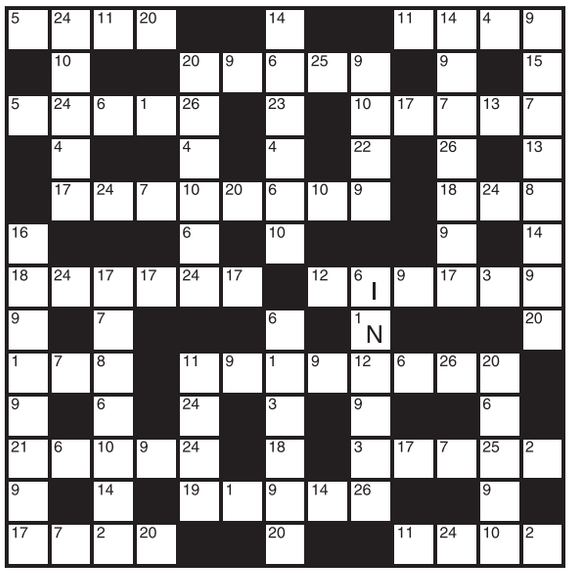
1. Expert in discovering liquid assets (5,7)
2. Sign of winter that is round the capital of Canada (3)

3 and 8Ac. Hard look coming from one with a monocle? (6,5)

4. It leads us to listlessness, in a way (9)
5. This is used for balancing a system of relative values (5)
6. Dimensions of certain chaps among a variety of mates (12)
7. Keep away from endless disturbed travel (5)
10. Offsets the advantages of convenient headgear, one hears (9)
13. Buy the drinks for a pleasurable occasion (5)
14. Name the man very narrowly elected! (6)
16. Somehow a Michaelmas daisy emerges from tares (5)
20. It's used in filling a saloon (3)

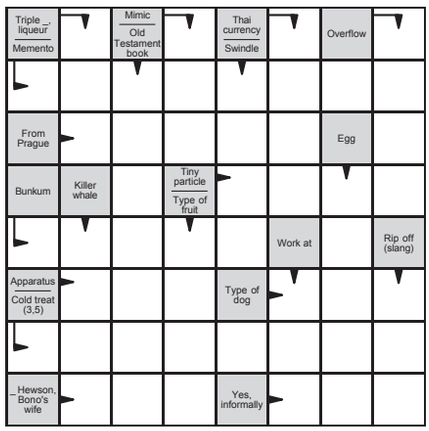
CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.





Arrowword



Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

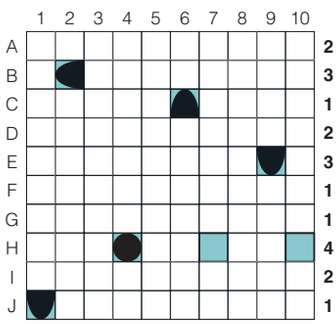
Battleships

Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

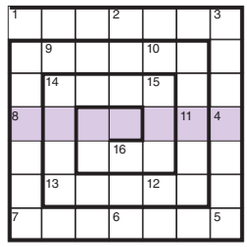
THE FLEET

1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine





Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Boast
2. Grasp
3. Mountain lion
4. Minute particle
5. Network
6. Quieten
7. Snake's sound
8. Vend
9. Heavy metal
10. Blunt
11. Fibber
12. Street
13. Hoodwink
14. Muslim ruler
15. Destroy
16. Shipshape

Keyword clue: A kitchen utensil

SUDOKU

Hard

5	6				2	1	7	
							4	9
4	1		9			5		
				1				
7								4
				5				
		7			4		2	8
2	3							
	5	4	2				9	1

Easy

		2				9		
3			7		2		8	
5					1		7	3
4				8		7	2	
		9			7	5		
	8	7		5	3			9
9	6		3				5	
	3		2		8		4	1
		4						

Solutions

Arrowword

Battleships

Double Crossword

Cryptic
Across: 1 Working class; 7 Arena; 8 Hastiness; 11 Intent; 12 Punter; 15 In a minute; 17 Elm; 18 Extra; 19 Tight; 21 Presents arms. Down: 1 Water diviner; 2 Ice; 3 Glassy; 4 Lassitude; 5 Scale; 6 Measurements; 7 Avert; 10 Handicaps; 13 Treat; 14 Justin; 16 Astern; 20 Gas.

Quick
Across: 1 Misrepresent; 7 Realm; 8 Bliss; 9 Ill; 10 Intercede; 11 Incite; 12 Resist; 15 Embarrass; 17 Get; 18 Cause; 19 Least; 21 Adventitious. Down: 1 Magnificence; 2 Era; 3 Remote; 4 Sobemess; 5 Noise; 6 Ostentatious; 7 Relic; 10 Interfere; 13 Ingot; 14 Mallet; 16 Bound; 20 Art.

Codeword
1=N, 2=Y, 3=C, 4=U, 5=J, 6=I, 7=A, 8=P, 9=E, 10=D, 11=B, 12=F, 13=M, 14=L, 15=X, 16=W, 17=R, 18=H, 19=K, 20=S, 21=V, 22=G, 23=Q, 24=O, 25=Z, 26=T

Word Spiral
1 Brag; 2 Grip; 3 Puma; 4 Atom; 5 Mesh; 6 Hunt; 7 Hiss; 8 Sell; 9 Lead; 10 Dull; 11 Liar; 12 Road; 13 Dupe; 14 Emir; 15 Ruin; 16 Neat.
Keyword: Spatula

Sudoku - Easy

1	7	2	8	3	5	9	6	4
3	9	6	7	4	2	1	8	5
5	4	8	9	6	1	2	7	3
4	5	3	1	8	9	7	2	6
6	1	9	4	2	7	5	3	8
2	8	7	6	5	3	4	1	9
9	6	1	3	7	4	8	5	2
7	3	5	2	9	8	6	4	1
8	2	4	5	1	6	3	9	7

Sudoku - Hard

5	6	9	8	4	2	1	7	3
8	7	3	1	6	5	2	4	9
4	1	2	9	7	3	5	8	6
7	8	5	3	2	6	9	1	4
9	2	6	4	1	8	7	3	5
3	4	1	7	5	9	8	6	2
1	9	7	5	3	4	6	2	8
2	3	8	6	9	1	4	5	7
6	5	4	2	8	7	3	9	1

A voyage of discovery

ANDREA POWELL experiences Latin America on a trip through the Panama Canal



Much has been written, watched and said about Latin America, but for me it is all about sparkling beaches, winding rivers, dense jungles, rocky mountain peaks, colourful coral reefs, and passionate people who know how to have fun. I encountered all of this and more on my 17-day cruise through the Panama Canal.

Highlights – and there were many – began with the beaches of Acapulco. From there we sailed along the winding rivers and dense jungles of Costa Rica, then headed along the Tarcoles River. Here, the estuary was teeming with birdlife – and even crocodiles. It was another of those beautiful clear blue days as we sailed past the famous Golden Arch of Cabo San Lucas and stopped just short of the shore. The pelicans were already putting on quite a show.

The final wonder of our trip was the Panama Canal itself. As we approached the canal's impressive engineering, it struck me that many incredible construction projects are still built today – engineers are always pushing the boundaries of technology. I tried to imagine what a phenomenal advancement this remarkable structure must have been back then, more than 100 years ago –it is still amazing, even in today's world.

TRAVEL PLANS

When to go
The weather in and around Panama is pretty hot all year around; however, if cruising the full transit then you may want to take account of the weather in the Caribbean for example, where there is a clear hurricane belt and a season that runs from June to November.

How to get there
The most common way to see the Panama Canal is by cruise ship. Princess Cruises, Celebrity Cruises and NCL are just three of the lines who take both full and partial transit cruises through the Canal. It is also possible to spend two days transiting, which offers a chance to really get off the ship to see the workings of the Canal close up. Prices for a full transit with a company such as Princess Cruises start at £1,398.

Accommodation
Seven nights at the Grace Panama costs from £950 in a Double City View King Room with breakfast.

An adventure maybe...?
A final option may be to take in the Panama Canal as part of a wider tour of Panama. An eight day G Adventures trip, for example, costs from £650 per person (based upon two sharing and excluding international flights).
This will not only take you to the city of Panama as well as the Panama Canal but also the Miraflores Locks and museum, a stay in Boquete and a chance to spend a couple of days in Bocas del Toro.

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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Don't rise to the bait, Mr Duff

I HOPE Ray Duff does not rise to the bait of Phil Granger's letter (KoS, letters, last week).

It would be nice if the pro-exit people had the grace to acknowledge that the exit is in progress despite being against the wishes of nearly half the population, instead of the snarling and sneering from them.

When the rules of a referendum are unconditional, it mean that important consequential decision may be made by a vote majority.

It leaves it open to be manipulated by an opportunistic rabble-rouser. Is this the true meaning of democracy?

How many of us would be content that justice had been done, in the law courts, when a six/four majority decided the fate of the accused?

Mr Duff, who is clearly clever and knowledgeable of economic issues, must bear in mind that some of those of equal status, concluded the opposite to him. So only time will tell whose prognosis was correct.

However, the exit is now a reality and Teresa May has shown, so far, that it is in good hands.

Not being rushed into decision making and a pragmatic attitude are so important for the immense problems she has undertaken to solve.

As someone who saw the advantages of either being in or out, I look forward to the reinstatement of our country's sovereign rights.

DR Hedges
Chatham

And here is the man himself...

IN brief reply to P Dean (KoS, letters, 02/10), it is of course absurd to blame future generations for where we are now; but those living with the consequences of such will not thank those who support our current short-termist and selfish economic system, nationalism, corporate dominance, and their political backers, which have created a vast gulf of inequality and exacerbated the environmental crises we now have, for either ignoring such or doing too little about it.

As for Brexit, the fact is that 27 percent of people did not vote, which means that any leaving the EU is based on only 37 percent of those who actually voted in what was still only an advisory referendum.

Further, public opinion changes over time, and as is likely, when the full consequences of leaving become clear and as savvy businessperson Lord Sugar recently said in the Radio Times: "In five years time we'll see the disaster." There'll be a clamour for a vote to return and it will be 'democratic' to do so.

Finally, while 17 million may have voted to leave; there's still 16 million who voted to remain, plus those who regretted their vote to leave, and the 16 and 17 year olds, the majority of whom backed remain, but were denied a vote, who are all far too large a constituency for any politician to ignore and indeed would do so at their peril.

Ray Duff,
Folkestone

Remainers: It's time to move on

ON Sunday October 2, at the Conservative Party conference, the prime minister, Teresa May, announced a law would be enacted to disentangle the UK from the EU.

There must therefore surely be some irony in the fact that on the same day Ray Duff had another letter published, containing another load of negative stuff he'd scratched around to find regarding Brexit.

Perhaps now he and his like might finally start to get the message – the process for the UK's withdrawal from the EU is under way and any attempts to 'subvert democracy' will be defeated.

OK, the next few years are going to be tough, but it will be worth it in the longer term when the UK emerges a stronger, more prosperous trading nation.

Not only that though, to make it an all-round success, the government has to address the concerns of the thousands of people who voted for Brexit, because they feel completely 'marginalised' in their own country. This applies in particular to many traditional Labour voters who are probably now feeling even more 'disconnected' from the party their families have supported for generations; and work will be required to create a society where they all feel socially included and valued citizens, in the new proud 'sovereign nation' they voted for.

Christopher Hudson-Gool,
Maidstone

Oops... this may be just too late

IS it not time to all a halt to the contest between 'remoaner in chief' Ray Duff and the Brexiteers before it becomes boring?

Each time Ray's arguments are shot down in flames he comes back with a newer, weaker set. In his own borrowed words 'he will never surrender'.

It reminds me of the Groucho Marx quote: 'These are my principals, if you don't like them, I do have others'.

S Reeves,
Herne Bay

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Rethink prison terms

THE escalating problems of violence and self-harm within our prisons is caused, to a large extent, by chronic over-crowding (KoS, last week).

Other than in exceptional cases, people with learning disabilities, mental health conditions, autism and substance addictions shouldn't be criminalised and sent to jail.

If they do not pose a danger to the public, they should be receiving help in specialist clinics or within the community in which they reside.

With our prisons at bursting point because of the amount of inmates inappropriately incarcerated, it is little wonder that staff and subjected to frequent abuse, intimidation and violence.

Prison officers are routinely quoted in reports saying that their own psychological and physical health has deteriorated as a consequence.

If there were fewer custodial sentences handed down to the sick in our society, as opposed to the bad, then it would certainly be increasingly difficult for drugs to be smuggled into jails as the staff would have less distractions and more time to monitor, search and patrol the expansive grounds and cell blocks in their charge.

Clive Wilkins-Oppler,
Canterbury

Pleasurama farce must be solved

LIKE some merry-go around the Pleasurama site in Ramsgate comes around to haunt us once again.

Chris Wells, Thanet council leader, called a meeting recently to inform the good citizens of the town how things currently stand and by the close of the meeting we were no more enlightened or enthused regarding that blighted site.

If the truth be told, all Mr Wells succeeded in doing was muddying the waters with half truths and distortions of the basic facts.

I, for one, could never be accused of defending the dismal record of the previous Labour council (or for that matter the Conservatives before them) but I cannot sit back and allow the current Ukip council to get off scot-free, claiming as they do that all the current problems should be placed on the shoulders of the previous administration.

Let's take a brief look back at the deal struck between Rick Everett (Labour) and SFP (site developers) during the previous administration. At the centre of this deal was the issue of the site freehold.

Naturally the developers wanted the freehold; nobody in their right mind would willingly sink millions into a leasehold site. Labour insisted the freehold would only be handed over on completion of the work. Furthermore there was a 'get-out' clause that placed an 'end-date' to the work being completed. Failure to meet this date would have allowed TDC to repossess the site.

All of this was very professional and above board, the way a major contract like this should be handled.

Along come the new Ukip council, a council I admit overwhelmed by inherited debt from the previous Conservative and Labour administrations. So how does Mr Wells and his team go about pushing the Pleasurama development forward? Quite simply by selling the freehold to the developers before any serious work has been undertaken let alone completed.

I'm astonished that Chris Wells, Ukip and the senior officers of TDC can be so naïve. Unless the people of this town stand up for themselves and demand that that money be spent on permanent infrastructures in the town, that money will disappear.

John Canicula,
Ramsgate

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent



Turnstones at Whitstable

by **Brian Summers, from Faversham**

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By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk







EXCITING TIMES: Renault's already attractive range will be further enhanced by the new Scenic and Grand Scenic (below), which boast more style and a much higher standard of finish...

Scenic view boosts Renault

BRAND UPDATE: French marque launched the compact MPV sector 20 years ago with its first Scenic, but generation No3 faces more competition...

TIMES are good for Renault, and set to get even better by year end, with the arrival of the third generation Scenic.

Having pioneered the people carrier/MPV (multi-purpose vehicle) concept with the Espace, the French marque then created the higher volume compact MPV sector.

Admittedly, rivals were quick to launch their own 'one-box' designs – notably Citroen with its even bigger selling Picasso – but the Scenic has been a big success story for Renault ever since.

The latest model should be no different, with clear signs inside and out that the Scenic has gone upmarket in both style and finish, echoing Renault practice on other recent stars - the newly-launched Megane family hatch and sporting estate, Clio supermini, and Captur and Kadjar crossover/SUV models.

All these have helped Renault UK car sales soar 15 per cent during the first nine months of this year to 68,109 vehicles, the best first nine months for the brand since 2010 and easily outpacing the overall market's 2.5 per cent increase, according to the industry's Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

This sales drive is supported by a good range of powertrains: punchy lightweight turbocharged petrol engines and smooth, frugal low emission diesels.

But there is always room for that distinctive Renault innovation too: the manufacturer is a leader in electric power, with impressive contenders in both commercial and passenger car markets, in the form of the Kangoo ZE light van and Zoe city car.



And you have to award credit for Renault turning the city car format on its head with the versatile and funky looking Twingo city car – and incidentally reverting to the rear engine, rear-wheel drive layout of some of its 1950s/60s best sellers.

But the focus now is on the forthcoming Scenic, available as a five-seater or the seven-seat Grand Scenic.

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KIA and its Sportage come of age...

The Korean marque's best seller was in yer face, but now it's toned down the looks and turned up the class, writes **Steve Loader...**

Kia Sportage 1.7 CRDi '2' Eco

Price:	from £22,050
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Nissan Qashqai

LIKE many people, I struggled to decide whether I like the new Kia Sportage, or prefer its predecessor.

The old car was a game changer for the Korean marque: stylish and distinctive while retaining familiar Kia virtues of good value and that unique seven-year/100,000-mile warranty, going on to become the company's UK best seller and a global hit – it is still sought after on the used market.

It is not surprising then that Kia opted for an evolution of the styling rather than its usual revolution when creating a fourth generation replacement Sportage, launched last year.

OK, you might say the newcomer (priced from £18,000) is not so 'in yer face' as before and less likely to attract brand switchers who made the old car such a success.

But that car established a beach-head, which the subtler looks of the new car can expand upon.

And beneath that skin there has been revolution anyway: the new car rides better, handles better, and looks and feels better inside, making the latest Sportage an SUV that stands with the best – pound for pound it may even be the best.







Cabin and boot space has risen too, helped by a 30mm longer wheelbase; the new car now vies nicely with the Nissan Qashqai – its most obvious rival – the Sportage's 503-litre boot defeating the Nissan's 430, even if the latter wins with 1,585 litres of ultimate load space versus 1,492.

And my one gripe about the old car has been addressed: rear seat backs often don't fold fully flat for a proper load space, but the previous Sportage's could have served as a ski jump. The backs still don't fold quite flush, but this can't swamp the new model's many interior positives.

Again available with front-wheel or all-wheel drive (from £21,995) – the latter denoted by a KX label – the engine line-up should suit all needs: 130bhp 1.6 petrol, 174bhp 1.6 petrol turbo, 114bhp 1.7 turbodiesel, and 2.0 turbodiesel in 134 or – my pick - 182bhp output.

The impressive petrol turbo is new, but the other four have been carried over.

The mainstay 1.7 diesel's fleet appeal helped it claim more than half the sales of the previous car.

Road tested here, it is even cleaner and more efficient this time around, but can sound gruff and is maybe getting long in the tooth, but this really is nit-picking when the Sportage feels so cohesive and comfortable from behind the wheel. Feedback from the all-new steering is excellent, and the composed cornering is balanced by good ride quality.

Yes, we might lament the old car's arresting shape, but the new car sees the Sportage come of age – possibly the moment Kia did the same.



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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

CTA Civil Engineering Ltd of Sunflower Cottage, Maidstone Road, Maidstone, Kent ME17 3LS is applying for a licence to use Sunflower Cottage, Maidstone Road, Maidstone, Kent ME17 3LS as an operating centre for 1 goods vehicles and 1 trailers.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

LICENSING ACT 2003: Application for Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that MR UFUK SEN of 29 High Street, Ashford Kent, TN24 8TF has applied to Canterbury City Council for the GRANT of a Premises Licence with late night refreshment for a hot food take away. Opening times applied for: Monday to Sunday 10:00am to 03:00am for the premises Lotus House situated at 192 Wincheap, Canterbury, CT1 3RY.

A register of licensing applications can be inspected at www.canterbury.gov.uk/licensing or at Council Offices, Military Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1YW tel. 01227 862000 by appointment with the Licensing Team between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

Any person wishing to submit representations to this application must give notice in writing to the address shown above, giving in detail the grounds of objection by 08/11/2016.

The Council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that his identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Panel and will therefore pass into the public domain. Representations must relate to one of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm. In the case of an application for a provisional statement, please note that representations will be restricted once a statement has been issued.

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Triple Nine Waste Management Ltd of Unit Z, Transfesa Road, Paddock wood Distribution Centre, Paddock Wood, Kent TN12 6UU is applying for a new operating license as follows; To Keep 3 vehicles at the operating centre Unit Z, Transfesa Road, Paddock Wood distribution centre, Paddock Wood, Kent TN12 6UU.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

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Shakey to strive for five at Brands

Shane Byrne is looking to clinch his fifth title this weekend

Superbike

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

SHANE 'Shakey' Byrne says he is enjoying his racing more than ever as he heads to Brands Hatch this weekend looking to become British Superbike champion for a fifth time.

The Sheppey rider leads his closest rival Leon Haslam by 17 points in the standings, meaning he could finish second in all three races and still clinch the title.

However, Byrne insists he won't be resting on his laurels, and owes it to the thousands that will be watching him in Longfield this weekend, to put on a show.

"I actually feel quite relaxed going into it, even though I've always been told if you haven't got butterflies then there's something not quite right with you," he told KoS.

"I've got a good cushion but I'd be doing my team, supporters, friends and family a disservice if I said it would be great to finish second.

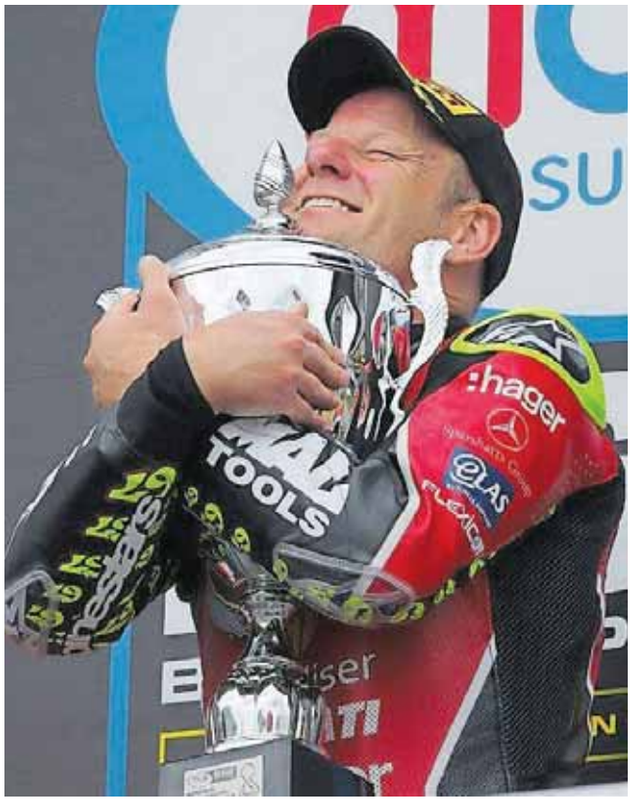
"It's my job to win races and that's what I'm going to do."

The desire to 'Strive for Five' has been a Shakey mantra for over a year, and having missed out on the championship last October, he will be looking to make amends this time around.

At 39, Byrne is one of the veterans on the circuit, but the importance of cementing a legacy of being the best ever means he is unlikely to be slowing down any time soon.

"I'm actually enjoying my racing more than ever, and I think you need a certain number of years underneath you to be an all-rounder," he said.

"There are so many good racers, it's so competitive and difficult week-in, week-out, and it's that challenge that drives you to do better each time.



READY: Shane Byrne holds a 17-point leader over his closest rival

Despite a home crowd cheering him on his local circuit, Byrne played down the importance of the north Kent circuit being the venue for the final round of the season.

"I wouldn't particularly say it adds an extra dimension," he admitted.

"Leon is always riding at Donington so probably has an advantage there but I don't race at Brands more than I do anywhere else."

Stevens signs on as Billings stars for England

Cricket

VETERAN all-rounder Darren Stevens has signed a new contract with Kent.

The 40-year-old will begin his 13th season for the county next spring after being awarded a benefit year by the club in 2016.

Stevens pledges his future to Kent after a strong end to last season, which saw the county finish second in Division Two, himself claiming centuries against Gloucestershire and Essex as he reached 500 appearances for the club in all formats.

Chairman of cricket Graham Johnson said: "Darren has given so much to Kent that all along we have wanted him to remain with us and are delighted that he has made that decision.



DEAL: Darren Stevens

"I'm sure all Kent supporters will greet the news with delight, help him round off his benefit year in style and look forward to his contribution to further develop what has been achieved to date."

Elsewhere, club teammate Sam Billings was hailed by England captain Jos Buttler after hitting an impressive 62 in a one-day series victory over Bangladesh earlier this week.

England successfully overhauled their opponents' 277 for six at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, with Billings, playing his first ODI in more than a year, replacing the injured Jason Roy at the top of the order.

Buttler said: "I'm immensely satisfied by that. Sam has been around the group for a long time and has been very unlucky to not play more. Asking him to open the innings today, I thought he played fantastically well."

Sport Shorts

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Burman earns gong as Ibrahim makes debut

DARTFORD boss Tony Burman has been named as Manager of the Month in the National League for September.

Unbeaten in both league and FA Cup action last month, the Darts have been boosted by the return of some key players, and recent victories against Maidenhead United and Chelmsford City showed their ability to dig in and get results against sides in good form.

Burman told the club's website: "It's very nice to win these awards, but it's always a team affair and I'd like to also congratulate all their backroom staff for their efforts."

Meanwhile, Darts keeper Derren Ibrahim made his international debut in the week – but conceded the fastest ever World Cup qualifying goal in the process.

The non-league stopper was appearing for minnows Gibraltar for the first time but his evening got off to a rocky start when he conceded after just 8.1 seconds to Belgium's Christian Benteke, who went on to score a hat-trick in a 6-0 win.



BOSS: Tony Burman



TEAM: Marc Seager and Alan Senior

FA Vase hero Seager in golf tournament woe

AN FA Vase-winning footballer-turned-golfer from Rainham has just missed out on a place at a tournament final in Marrakech.

Marc Seager, 44, helped Deal Town to the trophy in 2000 after a 1-0 win over Chippenham, before managing the likes of Whitstable Town, but has now turned his hand to golf.

Joined by club-mate, Alan Senior, they scored 34 Stableford points in the Morocco Matchplay southern pairs final in Devon.

However, it proved not quite enough to qualify them for a trip to February's grand final.

Four competitions culminate at the grand final: singles, pairs, mixed pairs and senior pairs, with 32 golfers, from across the UK, ultimately fighting it out for the titles.

Millwall clash brought forward

GILLINGHAM'S League One clash away at Millwall has been brought forward from its original scheduling of New Year's Eve.

Citing reasons of a reduced public transport service operating in and around London close to the new year, and fans' desire to spend time with their families, both clubs have agreed to instead play the game at 7.45pm on Friday, December 30.

Coincidentally, Justin Edinburgh's side travelled to the Den during the festive period last season as well, where they ran out 3-0 winners thanks to a Dominic Samuel brace and a strike from Bradley Dack.

The Gills went into this weekend in difficult form, having only won one of their last ten games in all competitions, including a 5-0 thrashing at the hands of Tottenham.

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